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Friday
31 Dec. '93

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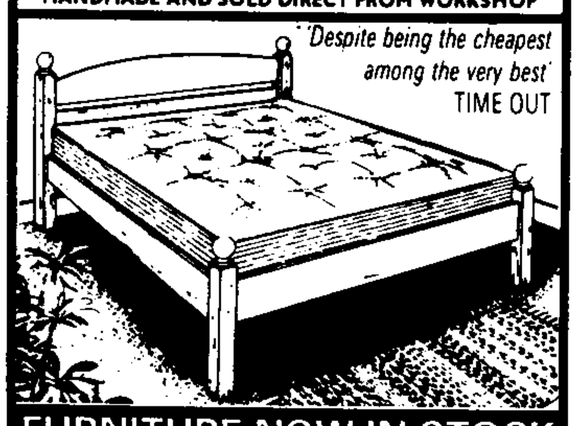

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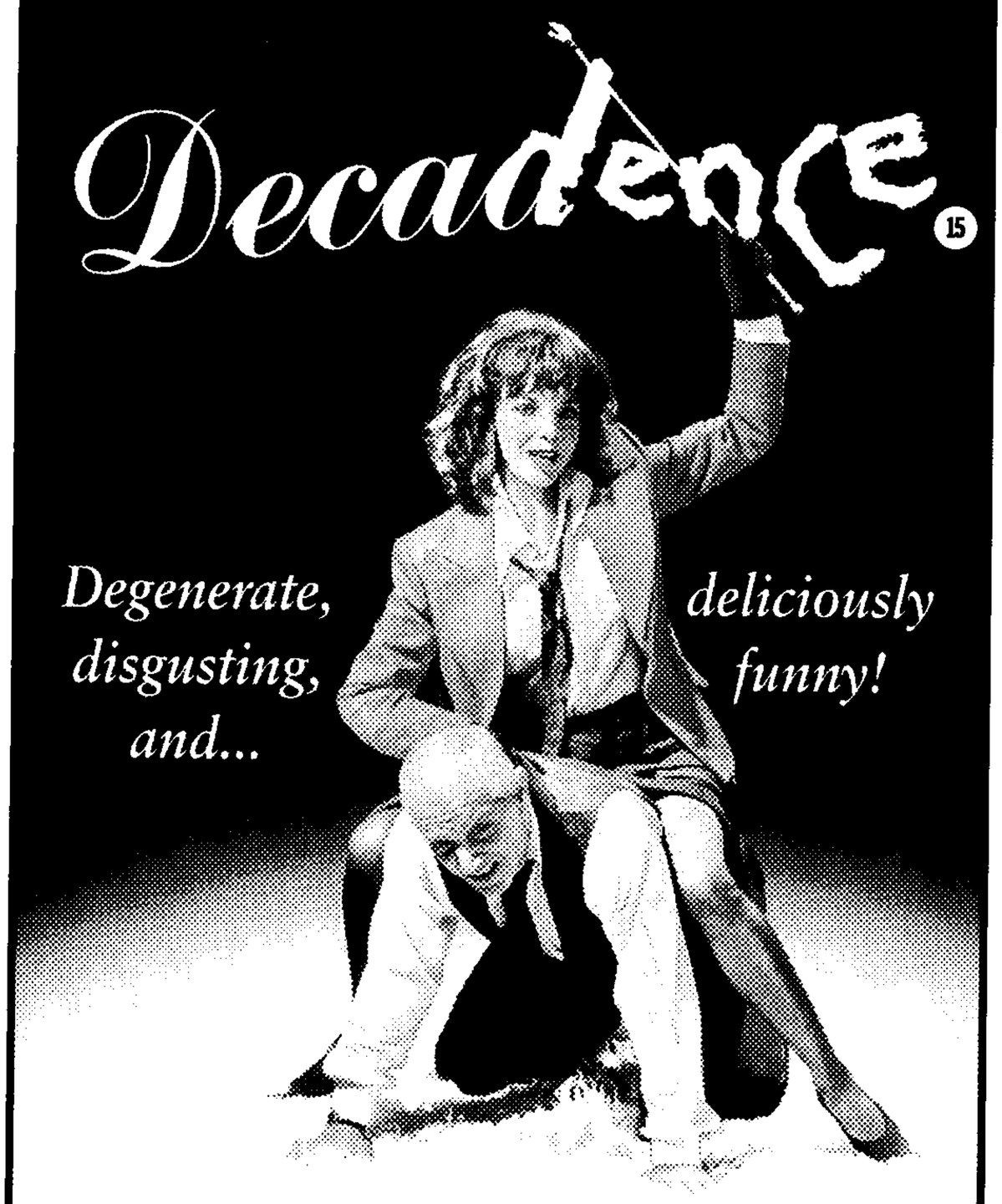
Take Time Out to see DECADENCE- they didn't !

JOAN COLLINS STEVEN BERKOFF

Decadence 15



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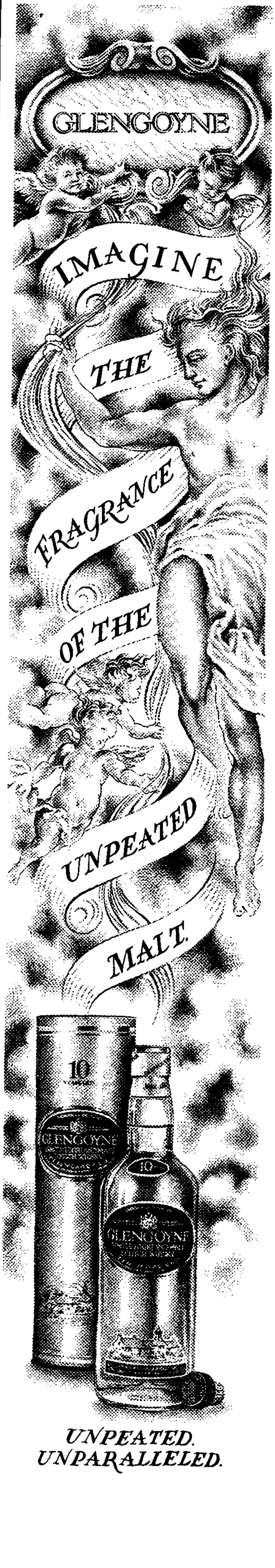

UNPEATED. UNPARALLELED.

Gnome

AS we enter 1994, there is terrific news for the economy. The latest survey from the Institute of Directors is, surely, the final proof that this country has left the recession behind us and is heading full-steam for recovery. Let me quote from the front page of the *Daily Telegraph* (29.12.93):

"The institute's bi-monthly survey of 300 members showed that 47% of them were more confident at the beginning of this month, compared with 42% two months previously."

What could be clearer! A massive 5% leap in the number of a small survey of well-paid industrialists who think things might be getting better! A staggering jump of 15 men who now feel a bit cheerier! And only half of all the other men didn't share this joy!

Is this not the most convincing statistic yet?

Ring out the church bells! Crack open the champagne! Vote Conservative!

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
Institute of Dire Surveys
Little Sample
Great Conclusion
Lies.

"He was found home alone"

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COLOUR SECTION

A BATTERY of Tory party big guns will be called to give evidence in the next few weeks to the Scott inquiry into the arms for Iraq scandal.

They include the Rt Hon Kenneth Baker; the Rt Hon the Lord Howe; the Rt Hon John Major; the Rt Hon Douglas Hurd; the Rt Hon Douglas Hogg; the Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke; the Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind; the Rt Hon Tristan Garel-Jones; the Rt Hon Michael Heseltine; and the Rt Hon Peter Lilley.

Put another way, this means the prime minister and five of his most senior cabinet ministers (foreign secretary, chancellor, and the ministers for defence, social security, trade and industry), plus two very senior former cabinet ministers and two very important junior ministers, will be obliged to answer in public largely hostile questions from a tribunal which the government itself set up.

Add to these yet another cabinet minister (the Rt Hon William Waldegrave) and the former prime minister (the Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher), and the total of senior Tory politicians to appear will be 12. There have been big political scandals before in this century — Marconi, Profumo etc — but none has reached so deeply into the heart of government as this one.

Though the cast is star-studded enough in January, the real sting may yet be in the tail of the inquiry. After the above, a series of customs officers are to be called. HM customs, which blew the gaffe in the first place with its prosecution of the Iraqi-owned Midlands firm Matrix Churchill, may not feel the same compunction to conform as did their representatives at the Commons select committee into the supergun in 1991 and 1992.

The public side of the inquiry will end in March with two crucial witnesses. The first will be Lord Trefgarne, the airline pilot who so delighted Margaret Thatcher by flying her around during the 1979 general election campaign that she made him a government whip.

Trefgarne went from strength to strength, becoming a junior minister for almost everything until he settled down at the ministry of defence where he served loyally from 1983 to 1989. Then he mysteriously swapped places with trade minister Alan Clark. Trefgarne is being left to the end by Scott because the inquiry feels he has even more questions to answer than had Clark (*see Footnotes, page 27*).

(Trefgarne does not like *Private Eye*, incidentally. Soon after he became a minister the *Eye* revealed that two ambitious aviation companies with which he was involved had gone into receivership. Even worse was our revelation in 1966 that Commander Anthony Courtney, a former Tory MP for Harrow, felt he had to resign his safe seat when he was photographed naked in the arms of an equally naked KGB agent while the commander was on important business in Russia. The revelation was followed by the collapse of the commander's short marriage — to Lord Trefgarne's mother.)

The last witness — and the one who is likely to be in the thickest soup of all — will be Sir Nicholas Lyell, the well-known member of Lloyd's, who also happens to be attorney-general.

NEXT TIME Nelson Mandela visits Washington, he should ask Bill Clinton about his new defence secretary, Admiral Bobby Ray Inman.

Inman was director of naval intelligence under President Ford in 1975 when his friend James Guerin started a highly profitable operation to break the arms embargo on white South Africa.

Guerin persuaded Inman to allow all sorts of his military hardware into South Africa on the grounds that the Simonstown naval base was providing vital information about the Russian fleet. When the Democrat Jimmy Carter was elected in 1976, he quickly put a stop to what he considered an undercover method of arming apartheid. But the operation, nicknamed Project X, had brought Guerin and his company ISC many millions of dollars. So grateful was Guerin that when the admiral retired he was put on the ISC payroll.

ISC is now bust, and Guerin serving a fifteen-year sentence for fraud. But Inman the covert sanctions-buster has been promoted by the "clean-sweep" Democrat administration to be the world's policeman.

The appointment will raise eyebrows at what is left of the electronics group Ferranti, among its largely rudundant workforce and at our own ministry of defence.

For just six years ago Ferranti was capitalised at more £1 billion, employed 26,000 people and was looking forward to a bright future. Unfortunately, the directors embraced the $670 million takeover of Guerin's ISC, whose profits had been massively inflated by non-existent contracts. The meltdown led directly to Ferranti's receivership in December. Inman, who takes control of the Pentagon on 20 January, was a member of the proxy board of ISC prior to the discovery that its major contracts were all utterly bogus.

He also served as deputy director of the CIA under Ronald Reagan, before leaving for positions in the private sector including stints at Tracor Inc (which went bankrupt) and Dell Computers (probed by the Securities and Exchange Commission). The ever amusing James Adams described Inman, the world's policeman, in a glowing *Sunset Times* tribute as "a defence professional who has the added value of a recent and successful career in business."

BACK TO BASICS

Street of Shame

A BLISTERING leader in the *Sun* headlined A HONG KONG PHONEY WE CAN'T AFFORD **makes fascinating reading.**

"Phonies don't come more cynically brazen than Chris Patten. His posturing antics as Governor are a disgrace. With all his hypocritical preaching about democracy he's come close to wrecking Britain's relations with China. As a result, major companies... are struggling to win orders in the world's biggest and fastest growing market," the *Sun* rants.

"British jobs are being threatened. British families are seeing their future put at risk. And for what?" Er, apparently it is just Patten trying to "rebuild his career" and, accordingly, "it's crazy to risk confrontation with Peking now, less than four years before we've got to hand the colony back anyway."

All this reads rather differently to earlier onslaughts on communist dictators unfit to host the olympics, the butchers of Tiananmen Square, foreign office appeasers, etc, etc. But then until recently Rupert Murdoch hadn't handed control of Hong Kong's pro-democracy *South China Morning Post* to the Chinese government or invested the proceeds of that deal in STAR, the Asian version of Sky. And, of course, in those days China's hated Premier Li Peng hadn't just banned the manufacture and sale of satellite dishes, thus jeopardising Murdoch's £250 million investment in the Hong Kong-based STAR.

AS THE *Daily Mirror*'s circulation plummets, the rag has turned to the lobbying company Westminster Strategy for help.

A "pitch document" has been produced for the *Mirror* called "How to save your relationship with the Labour Party". It says relations may be down the lav, but they can be rebuilt. It also explains "how to have a constructive relationship with the Tory party."

Most proper newspapers would use their trusted political correspondents to test the mood at Westminster, but the *Mirror* clearly no longer has anyone who is up to the job.

THE TRIAL of Roderick and Mark Newell for the murder *five years ago* of their parents on Jersey promises to be one of the most celebrated court cases ever heard in the Channel Islands.

Those unable to find a seat in the public gallery need not worry: a full account of the case has been put together by Detective Inspector Jimmy Adamson, the officer in charge, in collaboration with *Sun* hack Mike Sullivan.

The manuscript is being touted round London publishers before the case is heard. But has Mr Adamson heard the sad story of former DI Peter Topping of Greater Manchester police? He wrote up his account of the moors murders only for his publisher to be sued by the Greater Manchester police. The result was a handsome sum paid by the publishers to the police in compensation for the disclosure of information gained while in the employ of the police (and, therefore, the exclusive property of the police).

The rules on such matters, apparently, are not as strict in Jersey as they are in Manchester...

Dempster

A verb, as in 'to be dempstered'. In the 1770s this entailed being hanged, an expression commemorating the name of a contemporary London lackey, fond of giving himself airs, who made his living from other people's misfortunes. He hanged them. A common epithet for his trade was the 'crap merchant'.

Crime: An Encyclopedia

***SUN* columnists Piers Morgan and Garry Bushell have been attacking each other in print — but this gentle badinage is as nothing compared to their relations in the Wapping workplace.**

They may share an office and a secretary, but that is as cordial as they get. In the week before Christmas Bushell hacked into Morgan's computer and changed his log-on password from AFC (Arsenal football club) to CUNT (an unknown acronym). The same evening, at the *Sun* features party at Planet Hollywood, Piers sprayed Garry's crombie coat with crazy string as the TV hack arrived, while Garry responded by spraying the stuff at Morgan's face and throwing the can at him.

This seems to be an unhappy time for Morgan, who was harassed at the *Sun*'s Christmas party at Le Champenois (where advertising staff were "bonking" in the lavatories). This time it was not Bushell who was his tormentor but a man in his late forties who pursued Morgan round the restaurant, telling him how useless he was, sticking two fingers up to his face and threatening to bash him one. The mystery "fan" turned out to be the father of the boyfriend of Kelvin McKenzie's daughter, Kiershen.

FORMER *Observer* editor Donald "Pixie" Trelford is not only a sports columnist for the *Daily Torygraph* but a handsomely-paid consultant to Lonrho, the *Observer*'s previous owners (this in addition to his £250,000 redundancy package from the *Obs*, paid for by Lonrho).

Yet back in November he emerged as a freelance foreign reporter for one edition of the *Sunday Torygraph*. He had been to Tashkent, capital of the former Soviet republic of Uzbekhistan, and wrote that "a hectic gold rush is under way here, with British and American companies battling for the mineral rights".

Trelford interviewed the country's first president, Islam Karimov, and mentioned that Karimov's "warm feelings will be translated into contracts this week with the British government and selected firms — including Rothschilds, BZW and Lonrho." His cryptic final line was: "No prizes for guessing who gets the gold mine."

At no point in the article did Trelford explain that he is a consultant to Lonrho or that he in fact travelled to Tashkent in the Lonrho private jet as a guest of Lonrho boss Dieter Bock. Not content with being Tiny Rowland's mouthpiece, Pixie has now decided to maintain this role for Rowland's successor. Expect plugs for Lonrho in the *Oldie* during Trelford's forthcoming stand-in period as editor...

AFTER another 12 months of batty libel awards and gratuitous writ-issuing, 1993 ended with a rare glimmer of sanity when an editor actually dared to take on the libel lawyers — and won.

The editor in question was Stewart Steven of the London *Evening Standard*, who some weeks ago received a writ from Michael (*To Play the King*) Dobbs. The Tory novelist had taken umbrage at an article about him in the *Standard*, written by Melvyn Bragg.

Even though Steven had immediately offered Dobbs a right of reply to Bragg's criticisms, Dobbs's lawyer, our old chum Peter Carter-Fuck, was adamant that nothing less than large damages would suffice. Negotiations on a settlement got nowhere, and the case seemed doomed to go to court, with costs alone running into six figures.

Impatient with Carter-Fuck's determination to make mountains out of molehills, Steven wrote a two-page feature in the *Standard* just before Christmas, arguing that it was ridiculous for such a piffling dispute — which could easily be settled over a good dinner and a game of cards — to be turned into a full-dress court case.

The *Standard*'s legal advisers were aghast. If Steven published the article, they warned, Carter-Fuck might well sue for aggravated damages on Dobbs's behalf and would probably be awarded at least £300,000. Steven went ahead anyway. The morning after the piece appeared, as the newspaper's lawyers waited anxiously for the sky to fall in, Carter-Fuck telephoned Steven and announced that his client had now decided to drop the case.

A COUPLE of weeks before Christmas, the *Financial Times* published an interview with BBC boss John Birt, written by its media correspondent Ray "Ploddy" Snoddy.

The article was eulogistic in the extreme. "For Birt and the BBC," Snoddy wrote, "it has indeed been a remarkable year... one in which he achieved a significant victory over his opponents in the organisation — those he has mocked as ancient warriors pointing their muskets... Producer Choice has been 'a very great success'..." And so on.

Can the author of this gushing piece by any chance be related to the Ray Snoddy who wrote an article for *Broadcast* magazine in July 1993, just after Mark Tully's anti-Birt speech? Presumably not. For in *Broadcast* he announced confidently that "Birtism is already all but dead. By the time Tully got to fire his musket, Birt and the Birtists were already in retreat across a wide front... The evidence of disarray is overwhelming, particularly in the area of policy making." Birt, he added, had been forced to yield to the criticisms of people such as Tully: the "old soldiers" had won.

"I believe what I wrote in *Broadcast*," Snoddy told the *Eye* this week when tackled about his apparent *volte face*. So why was he now informing *FT* readers that Birt had defeated the old soldiers, having previously said the opposite? "When I write in the *FT* I report the facts as I can find them out."

Clear?

O·B·N

YESTERDAY when you quit your public duties, Diana, it was the end of an era for me...

To me, Diana, you **ARE** the Royals. When you go, all the beauty and the caring goes too.

Don't forget the public know how difficult it's been for you since you were thrust so young into such a high-profile position.

But you coped well. I'm sure I don't stand alone in asking you to reconsider your decision.

You're Britain's most prized asset. Don't throw it all away.

I think back to all the wonderful times we spent together, chatting, laughing and joking...

As one of the world's most beautiful women steps from public life, it's the photographers who are crying.

ARTHUR EDWARDS
Sun Photographer

Submitted by Francis Harvey.

£109 paid for similar submissions put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

HALLO!

The new heartwarming column

HALLO! GOOD NEWS at last, Hallo! can reveal, in the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Friends tell us that Prince Charles and an elegant, striking blonde companion enjoyed a hush-hush visit to Zimbabwe as recently as last September.

The evidently happy royal couple spent at least one night at the Nesbitt Hotel in Bulawayo, before studying the wildlife in the Wankai national park.

Ridiculously their visit — not an official one — got a frosty reception from some of the Zimbabwean high-ups, who mistakenly thought that the prince's companion was not the Princess of Wales — but someone called Camilla Parker Bowles!

Even President Mugabe, it seems, was thus deluded, and he excused himself saying he was "in mourning after the death of his wife". A senior minister was designated to look after the prince, and he also got hold of the wrong end of the stick. "We believe in mistresses," he said after the visit. "But we don't go around with other people's wives."

Quite how the Zimbabweans mistook Princess Diana for Camilla Parker Bowles is a complete mystery. Diana was in Zimbabwe in July, too — unaccompanied by Charles, that time — kissing lepers and feeding the starving. Happily the royal companion was excused such duties second time around.

HALLO! GEORGE CARMAN QC, the great advocate of our age, is about to grace the courts again with his usual successful mixture of gravitas and legal acumen. "It's a blow-job number," he tells attentive students of the law.

The case involves the *Sun* newspaper and that fine actress Gillian Taylforth, who plays Kathy Beale so brilliantly in *EastEnders*.

The *Sun*, for whom the country's finest lawyer is acting, believes there was an incident in a motorway lay-by, involving some minor sexual goings-on.

The delightful actress maintains that the silly police made a terrible mistake and misinterpreted an innocent medical situation.

We can, of course, rely on George not to turn this serious case into a smutty public spectacle.

"First the Wonderbra, now the Wonderpants"

HALLO! THE QUEEN graciously invites us into her luxury home at Sandringham where she and Prince Philip are putting their feet up for a few weeks over the Christmas break.

The Duke of Edinburgh is in expansive mood and tells us of a lucky escape he had while on his travels.

It happened while visiting Leigh Environmental, a company that has earned so many millions for its sensitive disposal of toxic chemicals in the clay quarries and old mine workings that surround the quaint town of Walsall.

Philip was surveying Leigh's Sealosafe pits — old quarries where toxic chemicals are carefully placed after being rendered inert — and the Leigh bosses proudly led him across the nearly-full pit. Suddenly the surface began to crack — and the the Queen's devoted consort began to sink into the foully bubbling quagmire beneath. Luckily, said the brave prince, he was pulled clear just in time.

HALLO! *BRILLIANT barrister David Cocks QC, hero of the Roger Levitt fraud trial in which he led for the crown, has been in court again — on his own behalf. Sadly for David, who many admirers hope will soon don a judge's robes, the decision went the wrong way.*

He was in court over the long-standing matter of maintenance for his love-child, born to his former pupil barrister. The original order for maintenance of £7,000 a year, later bumped up to £10,000, was made at Willesden court. But the mother applied to Marylebone magistrates' court to have the order extended to the end of the boy's full-time education.

Mr Cocks opposed this and appealed to the high court to have the case transferred to a higher, county court. The mother's counsel, Joanna Dodson QC, submitted that "the father has used his advantageous financial position to engage in litigation which is wholly misguided, which may have had as its purpose the intimidation of the mother". And the judge hearing the appeal decided to award indemnity costs — the highest level possible — against poor old David!

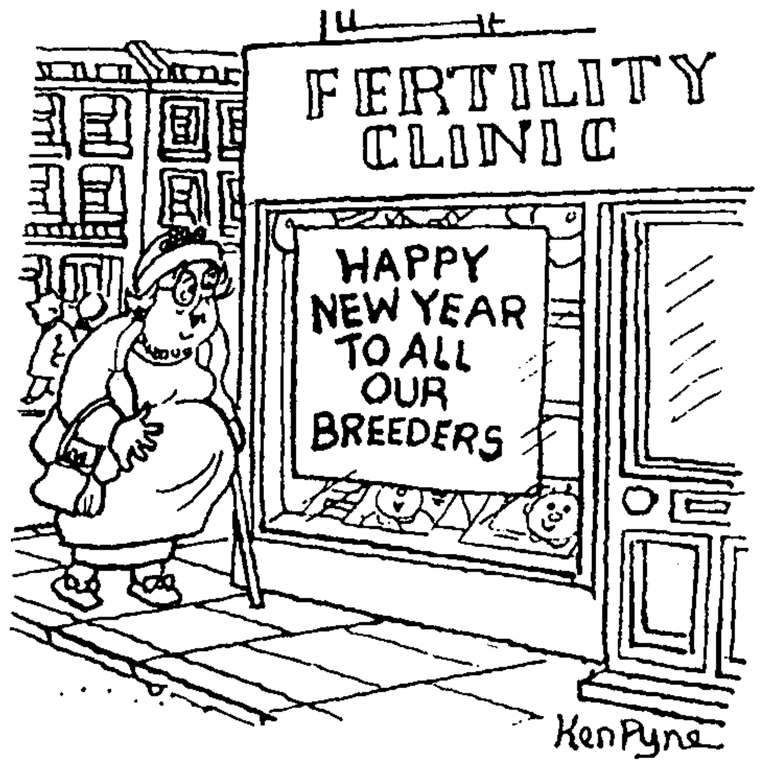
Luckily he is not in the same league as those errant fathers who are pursued by the child support agency. David owns a £500,000 house in Brondesbury, north London; a 50-acre farm in Wrackensford, Devon; a £3,000 racehorse; and still has a few coppers left over to take part in some modest pheasant-shooting and stag- and fox-hunting.

HALLO! IF ANYONE deserved a rest this Christmas it was the husband and wife political team of Virginia and Peter Bottomley. We hope no one spoiled the family get-together by mentioning Brook Hospital in Eltham, where Peter is the MP.

It is a touchy subject in the Bottomley household. For while Virginia, the government's health secretary, has been actively presiding over its closure, husband Peter was once very active in trying to keep it open.

He joined the fight to save the Brook, famous for its cardiothoracic and neuroscience departments, in the late 1980s, and even made a donation of £40 in 1991 to the Save The Brook Campaign. He joined protesters on a bus to the local health authority, and made frequent visits to the hospital, sometimes accompanied by his wife, playing his flute to sick patients.

Now that the decision to close it and two other hospitals in the borough of Greenwich has been made, Peter has withdrawn from the campaign. This sensible decision no doubt ensured that the family's festive games of charades went off without a hitch...



HALLO! *MICHAEL DOBBS, the brilliant novelist, invites us into his delightful home only hours after making the magnanimous decision to withdraw his libel suit against Melvyn Bragg and the Evening Standard.*

This must have been a difficult time for Michael, and his forbearance in such matters is most impressive. After all, he did not sue the Standard for libel when its muck-raking gossip column suggested that the character of the cocaine-sniffing advertising executive Roger O'Neill in his first novel, House of Cards, had been based on the former Saatchi & Saatchi wizard Timothy Bell.

What could have been more offensive or libellous than to suggest that the charming Dobbs, himself a former Saatchi employee, might have deliberately smeared the genius behind Lady Thatcher's election victories? As Michael tells us over mince pies and sherry, it is all water under the bridge.

HALLO! CAN IT be that newspaper gossip columnists, those peddlers of hurtful tittle-tattle, will turn over a new leaf in 1994 and start printing the happy stories instead? It would be lovely to think so.

Certainly the omens are good. On Christmas Eve, the normally scurrilous Londoner's Diary in the *Evening Standard* published a charming article about Victoria Hull, described as "the Duke of Somerset's effervescent sister-in-law". The paper congratulated Victoria, 29, on landing a "plum role" in a new Sealink television commercial.

Who should take the credit for this delightful piece of journalism? Victoria shyly confides that we should ask her boyfriend, Sebastian Shakespeare — who, as luck would have it, works as a reporter on Londoner's Diary. Clearly, he is a young man who will go far!

The Marquesa

JOHN MAJOR is getting very testy with the inquisitive Robin Cook. He wants Labour's spokesman on trade and industry to stick to his brief and stop asking silly questions about 10 Downing Street.

Cook is not at all happy with the six-line reply he received to his letter of 26 November, which asked about recent reports that 10 Downing Street had been used for functions to raise money for the Tory party. Major's reply brusquely referred Cook to two answers he had given last July to backbench Labour MPs David Winnick and Tony Banks.

These answers, however, do not deal with the matters raised by Cook. For instance, in his answer to Banks on 5 July Major said: "I can confirm that since November 1990 [when Thatch was deposed — Ed] there have been no functions at 10 Downing Street at which funds have been raised for political parties."

The point of Cook's questions was that Major's proud boast — that he does not use the government building of 10 Downing Street to raise money for the Tories as Thatcher did — is no longer relevant. The Tory party is desperately in debt. It owes more than £19 million, and this huge overdraft might not be acceptable to any other bank, save the one that tolerates it. It is the Royal Bank of Scotland (chairman: former Tory cabinet minister Lord Younger), which also happens to offer a special credit card to Tory party supporters emblazoned with the Tory torch.

What worries senior Tories and businessmen is Major's apparent lack of concern about the debt. Until recently he felt that as soon as a general election looms, big business, terrified of Labour, will quickly fill the empty bucket. His mind was changed at the Tory conference in a series of urgent talks arranged by Charles Hambro, chairman of the bank which bears his name.

Hambro and colleagues reminded Major that he has to fight local elections and European elections in 1994, and a hefty bank overdraft won't help. It is time to get big business money *now*, they warned, and the best way to warm the cockles of a rich man's heart is to invite him to dinner at Downing Street.

After all, the food is good (especially when provided by outside caterers), the venue is free (even Major admits that the host pays only for the food and drink, not for the most prestigious premises in the land), and anyone who gets an invite to Number Ten believes he is on the fast track to heaven — well, the House of Lords, anyway.

Major relented. At least two Tory fund-raising dinners have been held at 10 Downing Street since then. They have been reported, but not in detail. For not only does Major refuse to admit his U-turn on the principle of using 10 Downing Street for party fundraising, but he has also changed the practice of answering questions about the guests.

When Cook asked for guest lists and future dates of Tory fundraising sprees at 10 Downing Street, Major contemptuously replied that he had "no intention" of doing so. The Downing Street press office has been told to deal with any questions about Tory fundraising there by referring them to Tory central office, which of course tells the questioner to whistle for the information.

Under Thatcher, a question such as "Has Lord Hanson visited 10 Downing Street"? would be answered, yes or no, whether or not the function was for Tory fundraising. Now, under decent, honest, nice Mr Major, such a question is no longer answered.

The *Eye* will find out for itself with readers' help. If you know of any guest to a fundraising do at 10 Downing St, feel free to let us know.

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (30)

USEFUL DEVICE FOR MEASURING THE DEPTH OF WATER

NOT MUCH festive cheer for John "Brunel" MacGregor on the rail privatisation front...

The Gatwick Express, being run as a "shadow" franchise prior to its sale to the private sector, is losing money.

InterCity, once highly profitable, is now suffering from competition (oh dear) from alternative BR services, and having to pay "realistic" charges to Railtrack.

Red Star parcels, the only potential plum on the railfreight side, was recently put up for sale but no one wanted it. And RFS, the company running the former BREL works at Doncaster, has gone into liquidation.

This clouds the outlook somewhat for selling off BR's four remaining engineering works.

THE decision to press ahead with the £2.8 billion plutonium plant at Sellafield that nobody wants is hugely embarrassing for two members of the cabinet.

Step forward Tony Newton and David Hunt, who years ago both voted against the Thorp monster. Hunt is the last of the wets; while Newton was probably just being absent-minded. Are they now speaking out over their colleagues' stupidity? No sense in making the government look even more discredited than it already is.

SIR Bernard Ingham is not the only Tory knight who gets paid by the nuclear industry and hates wind power (see last *Eye*).

Tubby, fun-loving Sir Donald Thompson, MP for Calderdale, declares an interest in the British Nuclear Forum. It was Sir Donald who pioneered the delightful phrase "lavatory brushes in the sky" to denote wind turbines, only to have his phrase vulgarised still further by Ingham who wrote about "bog brushes".

'Backbiter'

THE ROAD LOBBY (7)

THE private car should be no great friend of traders in towns, suburbs and villages.

A survey of outer London town centres found that most local shop income came from people who walked or took a bus to the shops. And pedestrianised streets now form the retail hub of many cities.

Conversely, out-of-town superstores, which are destroying smaller local shops, are a big ally in the road lobby/British Road Federation's fight to increase car usage. All such developments feature good road access and enormous car parks but are rarely served by public transport other than the token minibus.

The out-of-town concept only works because of our obsession with cars, and given its obvious detrimental effects on village and town shops it is strange indeed to find National Chambers of Trade Ltd on the BRF's membership list (as at 31 December 1992).

ENERGY NEWS

AS PREDICTED in the *Eye*, Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, has crumpled in his threat to refer the massive generating duopoly to the monopolies commission.

It was always an empty threat because the government is desperate to sell (for £3 billion) its remaining 40 percent stake in National Power and PowerGen — and could never do so if the industry were threatened with break-up.

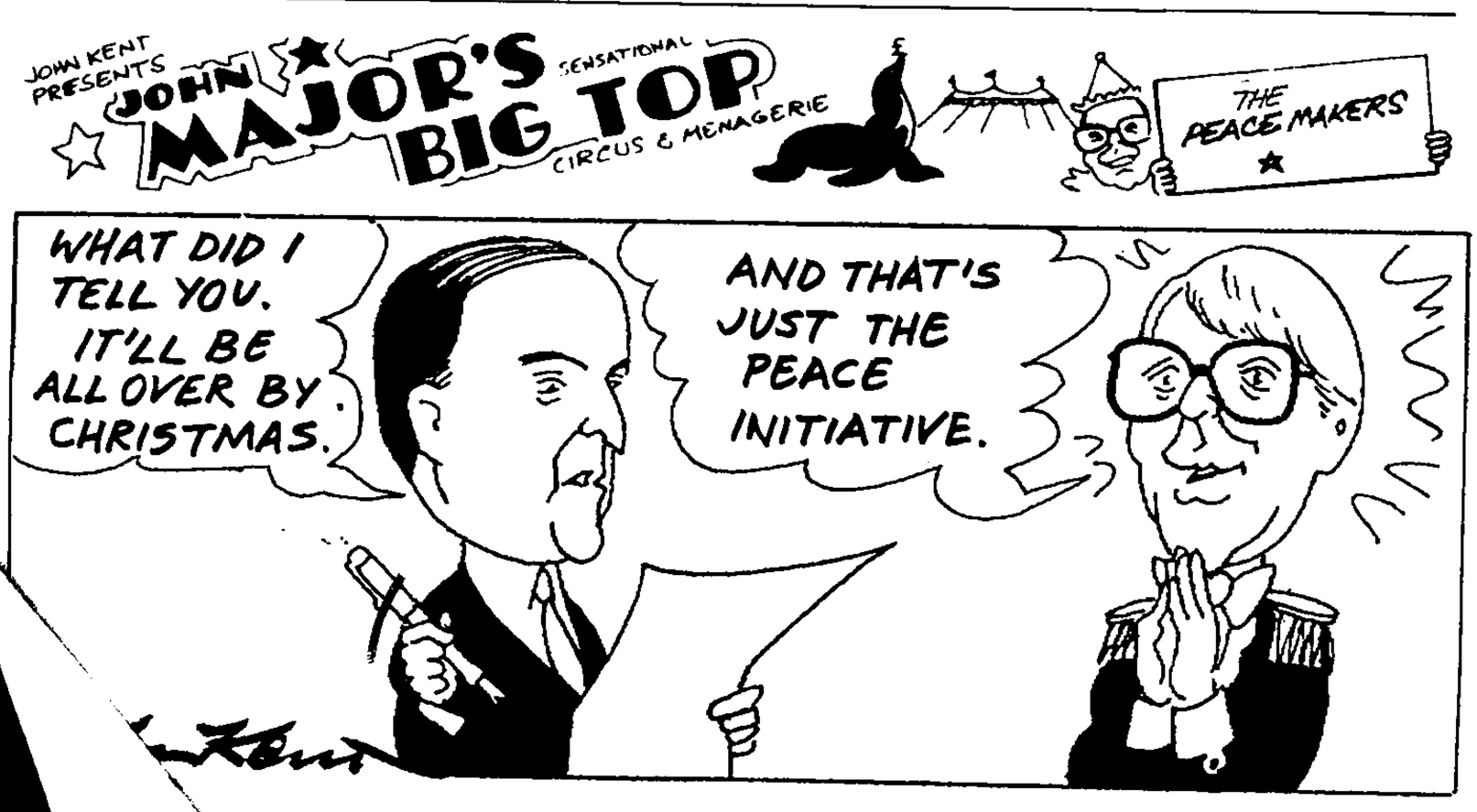
Littlechild's Christmas present to his employers came on 15 December when he told the giants he would "not need to make a reference" if they threw him two bones: to promise to sell some of their power stations instead of shutting them down, and to give "assurances on prices" until the market is more competitive.

The generators were criticised only 18 months ago for closing plant and not selling them, but still Littlechild had to appeal plaintively to their goodwill. Innocents might think it advantageous to sell off unwanted power stations. But it is the nature of privatised electricity generators that they stand to gain by keeping down the available supply and forcing up the price, and they do not want to surrender their dominant position to new competitors.

NO SOONER had the pit closed at Sharlston, Wakefield, with the loss of 535 jobs than a planning application was submitted by a private mining company... to turn the countryside above the pit into an opencast mine.

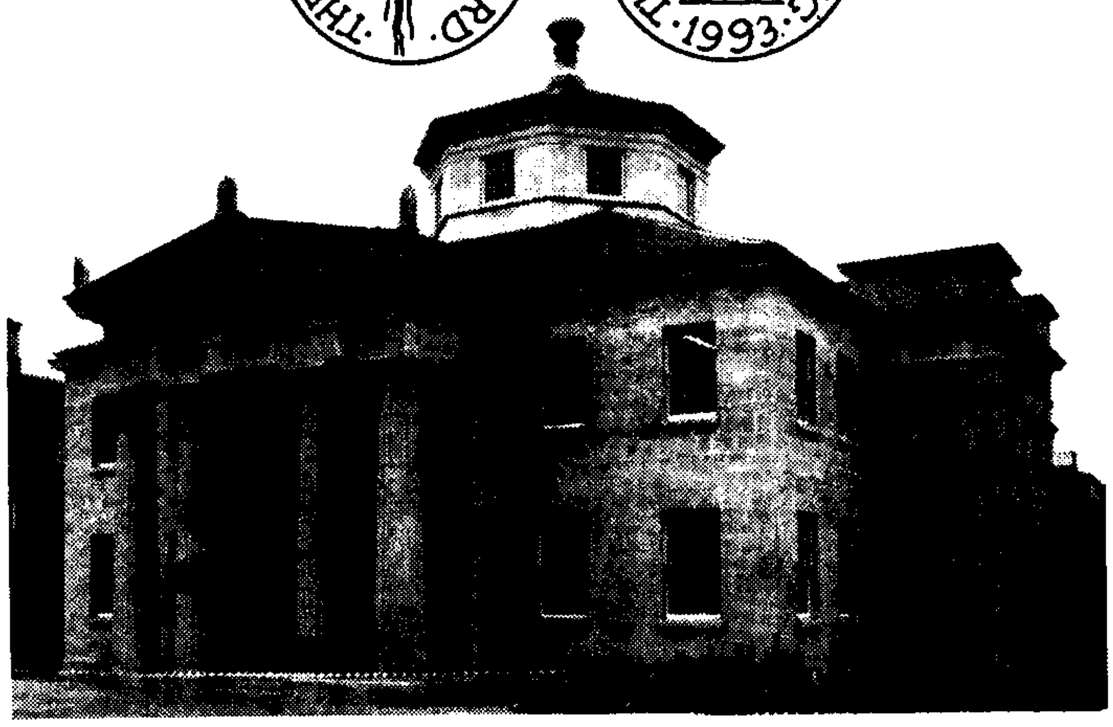
But hang on a minute: if there is no market for the pit's coal, who will buy the opencast coal? Or, if there *is* a market for the coal, why was Sharlston closed in the first place?

The madness of government energy policy can be seen across the coalfields where opencast operators, who employ very few miners, are driving their lorries through mining village streets carrying coal that unemployed miners were always told could not be sold.


JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP
CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
THE PEACE MAKERS
WHAT DID I TELL YOU. IT'LL BE ALL OVER BY CHRISTMAS.
AND THAT'S JUST THE PEACE INITIATIVE.
Kent

NOOKS & CRANNIES

THE SIR HUGH CASSON AWARD · THE WORST NEW BUILDING · 1993 ·



THERE is a form of mental illness in the architectural community known as *stylomania* (from the Greek: excessive love of columns) which strikes down normally intelligent and observant critics. Its principal symptom is a totally uncritical admiration for *any* modern Classical building.

(There is also a related disease called *stylophobia*, normally suffered by Modern architects, which results in a dogmatic refusal to see any merit in a modern building with columns, but let that pass.)

The most famous sufferer of *stylomania* is, of course, HRH the Prince of Wales, who is a bad case; but other victims include Clive Aslet, the editor of *Country Life*, and Marcus Binney, architectural correspondent of *The Times*.

Severe cases of this myopic distortion of aesthetic judgement are brought on by consideration of the work of Quinlan Terry, better known as "God's Own Architect" through whom Moses, Solomon and Vitruvius speak to our benighted age. Mr Terry was a devoted assistant to the late Raymond Erith, a seriously good traditional architect who demonstrated the inestimable virtue of being able to abstract, to leave things out.

When Erith died in 1973, his partner was left as (apparently) the only British architect of a younger generation able to pick up the smouldering torch of Classicism. When handsome, singleminded, blinkered Quin held it aloft amidst the gloom of modern British architecture, he was extravagantly applauded. But those who longed to revive tradition seem never to have asked if the new Messiah was really any good as an *architect* or was merely adept at reproducing Classical details copied from Palladio or whoever.

The poor fellows of Downing, Cambridge, have suffered from an epidemic of *stylomania* and have commissioned Mr Terry to design several buildings in the fond belief that he works in the Neo-Classical tradition for which the college has its niche in architectural history.

Mr Terry's first effort, the Howard Building (paid for by profits from "The Cambridge Diet") in fact ignored that tradition by having a Corinthian order jacked up on pedestals when every other building in the college, whether by Wilkins, E.M. Barry, Herbert Baker or Bill Howell, rose from a common podium level. The Howard Building is also conspicuous for its architect's complete inability to integrate a giant order on three facades with a subsidiary order on the fourth and by having no fewer than *eight* false windows — four of them in symmetrical pairs (and so redundant).

Undeterred, the fellows then asked G.O.A. to design the Maitland Robinson Library near the entrance to the college. This has recently been opened. Mindful of criticism of his earlier efforts, Mr Terry has tried to make his latest masterpiece respond to the Greek Revival character of Downing established by Wilkins in 1805. He has built a Greek Doric portico which, this time, rises from the proper stylobate level, although it is nothing like as high as Wilkins' Ionic order. On a side facade he has plonked, for no apparent reason, a filled-in version of the Choragic Monument of Thrassylus. The building is square on plan, with a central octagonal staircase hall which rises to a lantern by the Temple of the Winds.

So far, so good — if we ignore such things as the way asymmetrical drainpipes slice through the podium. But the whole thing somehow fails to hang together. As for the portico, this is meant to be modelled on the so-called Portico of Augustus as illustrated in Stuart & Revett's *Antiquities of Athens*. But Terry has added spindly acroteria which are grotesquely out of scale. Archaeology is not architecture, of course. But the real point is that the portico is unrelated to the building behind. There is an inept disjunction between the pediment cornice and its continuation, but worst of all is the fact that the upper library windows intrude into the level of the architrave of the Doric order.

To anyone who understands that, for Neo-Classicists, an order was not cosmetic but the expression of a logical trabeated structural system, this is criminally painful. Whether such stupidities reflect Mr Terry's ignorance of the Greek Revival or just his crashing ineptitude as an architect I would not like to say.

Yet, "for sheer beauty", writes Marcus Binney, "the front of Terry's new library at Downing... rivals any Greek revival building in England". The crassness of this statement is breathtaking. The British Museum? Chester Castle? Belsay? The Grange? The work of Soane, or Smirke, or Harrison, or Cockerell?

Yet even David Watkin, Cockerell's biographer, can compare (favourably) Terry's library with the work of that most sophisticated and refined of Classicists (*Eye* 834) in the *Spectator*. Is such wilful suspension of usually high intellectual and aesthetic standards a symptom of acute *stylomania* or just a pathetic and shameful form of political correctness, stemming from a conviction that all "Modern" architecture is simply appalling?

Readers may think I am pedantic in my criticisms. But any building must be judged by the tradition to which it aspires. And what matters is not whether a building is Classical, or not, but whether it is good or bad. If the design for the Maitland Robinson Library, a gauche and vulgar essay in misunderstood Greek Classicism, had been offered by a third-year student in any decent school of architecture in, say, 1930, it would have been *failed*. It is therefore a worthy winner of the Sir Hugh Casson Medal for the Worst New Building of MCMXCIII. Happy new year!

'Piloti'

Pseuds Corner

They share a wealth of interests with their adolescent audience and in this they owe more to black US comics, like Eddie Murphy and Richard Pryor, for whom laughter is mainly a medium for the meeting of minds. It's post-alternative populism which led Newman and Baddiel and their thousands of disciples to Wembley.

WILLIAM COOK
The Guardian

When he left Cambridge in 1986 with a double first, Baddiel enrolled to do a PhD at London University — "mainly to get a grant so that I could survive and carry on doing comedy" — and for the next two and a half years he wrote six chapters of a doctoral thesis on "the cult of the little girl in the 19th century". He still thinks he might complete it. "Sometimes I yearn for it, when I'm being attacked from all sides. I am the most critically attacked comic of our time and sometimes I'd rather be in the British Library."

Independent On Sunday

"Alternative comedy was the comedian as straight man, coming on like a poly lecturer and telling the government how to organise motorways. There is more warmth and showbiz to our work," says Newman. "Great comedy should be a form of poetry as a testimony to irrational human spirit."

Daily Telegraph

"I am a writer first — who has been sidetracked into performance," says Newman. "I feel estranged from myself when I am not writing prose. I don't get that feeling of connection when I am writing gags."

Daily Telegraph

Newman's comedy stems from a constant wrestling with romantic idealism and prosaic reality. As he says in his act: "It's lonely being an intellectual if, like me, you're a big fan of Luther Vandross."

Time Out

In Aristotle's *Poetics*, the definition of a tragic hero is given as "a prince, beloved of his nation-state, who, and at the moment of his greatest potential, comes to disaster by his own undoing". Most contemporary thinkers believe that this mythical idea of tragic heroism, with its ordered structure of rise and fall and its implicit belief in a universal justice, is conceptually untenable in our nihilistic, chaos-ridden modernity. Such men and such narratives just do not happen any more. I watched Gazza crash knee-first into Garry Charles in the opening five minutes of the 1991 FA Cup Final and thought: yes, they do.

DAVID BADDIEL
Independent Magazine

CONTRIBUTORS: Uncle Tom Cobbleigh and all.

£10 paid for entries

ITV

End of Year Report
All channels

THE TURN of the year and deepest winter, and the sound of ITV franchise bid documents crackling on an open fire, while the BBC audience share drops gently to earth, and poor Bob Cratchitt (Asst Head of Requisitions, Non-Programme Services) slaves by candlelight over the latest Producer's Choice paperwork. A time for reflection on the work of Britain's television companies in the previous 12 months.

BBC1: This channel spent part of the year under emergency management, and it is 1994 that will be the real test of its new controller, Alan Yentob. So far, Yentob's tenancy has been a triumph of packaging: the programme trails and station idents look gorgeous, and all he now needs is a few shows deserving such surrounds.

His main trick — of moving over BBC hits and hoping they grow bigger followings — was successful with the BBC1 run of repeats for *Absolutely Fabulous*, but this month he tries the same with the Clive James talk show. Comfortable with intelligent populism, Yentob has yet to demonstrate that he can commission and handle drop-dead populism: *Noel's House Party* was inherited.

Talked in to the safe BBC choice for *Question Time*, he would be well advised to find a compensatory slot on BBC1 for the rejected Paxman: what about a *Walden*-style extended interview to replace the knackered *On The Record*? Yentob isn't, though, conceding to the idea that BBC1 programmes should be judged purely by ratings or that his channel should be an ITV wannabe. The astonishingly brilliant *Between The Lines* has been allowed back for a third series despite audiences (in the seven millions) that would have meant death on ITV.

Hit Of The Year: *Between The Lines, Life In The Freezer.* Shit Of The Year: *Harry, Scarlet and Black.*

BBC2: Michael Jackson has had even less time to show form, but he needs to accept quickly that concept scheduling — Thatcher Week, Kennedy Night, Radio Night — needs a rest. Willingness to kill off the channel warhorse *40 Minutes* and to rattle the cage of the *Arena* boys suggests unexpected toughness. Too many people, however, inside and outside the BBC, are judging BBC2's success by its weekly ratings share against Channel 4. If that isn't the game Jackson is playing (and Birt has excused him from it), he needs to get up and make a few speeches about it soon.

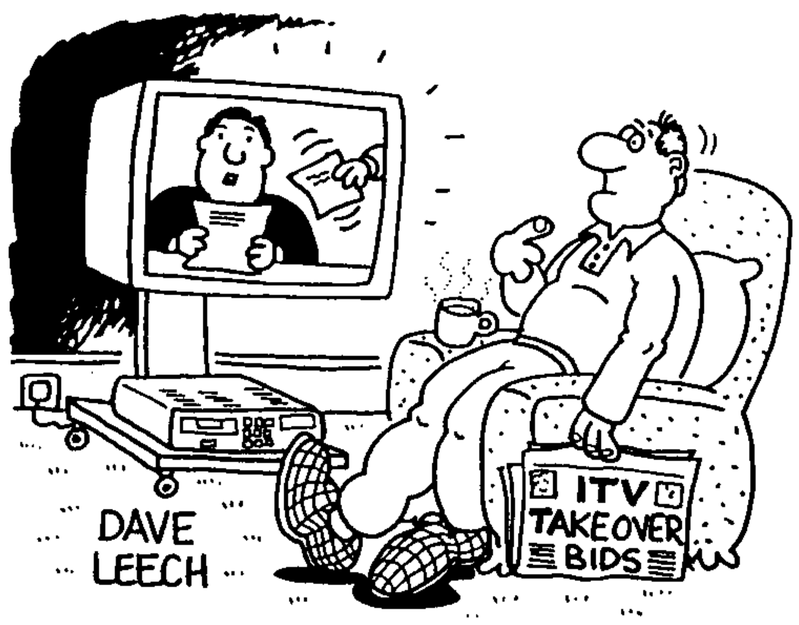
Hit Of The Year: *The Ark, The Buddha Of Suburbia.* Shit Of The Year: *Celebrity Mantlepiece, Thatcherworld PLC.*

ITV: The first year of the new Thatcherite arrangements has almost totally vindicated the Jeremiahs. Programme quality is down — tune in at random to Carlton or to US-influenced series like *Crime Story* or *Hollywood Women* — and *News At Ten* should seek sponsorship from Pampers, its coverage is now so baby-led.

The takeovers looming will further threaten distinctiveness and encourage shareholder greed over duty to audiences. One of the ironies is that we have talked for years of the decline of British television being measured in the birth of more channels. But, in terms of ITV, in the short-term at least the current prognosis is for decline produced by fewer, corporate-compound, channels. Only in the area of drama from Granada has ITV shown a desire to compete with the BBC channels for anything except ratings.

Hit Of The Year: *Cracker, Rik Mayall Presents...* Shit Of The Year: Anything from Carlton.

Channel 4: A triumphant year — ratings and revenue wise — for a channel nervously launched on to its own commercial feet. Programming has been less memorable. Documentaries have been strong, particularly *Cutting Edge*, but the percentage of the overall drama budget spent on the American *Tales Of The City* and the nostalgic repetitions of *Lipstick On Your Collar* seemed unfortunate after the channel's strong tradition of British political drama.



"You're watching LWT, er... Yorkshire Television... wait a minute, Granada"

The alternative "Gay Christmas" looked like a desperate twitch of guilty would-be radicalism after a year of capitalist triumphs. The buoyancy of the channel as a business is another huge boost for Michael Grade's reputation, but, in 1994, we need to see his touch back on the creative buttons.

Hit Of The Year: *Cutting Edge, Come On Down And Out!* Shit Of The Year: *Lipstick On Your Collar.*

BSkyB: Shit Of The Year.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

IT IS NOT enough for BBC television staff to have to make boring programmes to Birtian formulae — but they have to vote for them as well.

A recent memo circulating in the documentaries department said: "You all know how important it is for our top programmes to achieve the recognition they deserve. In two or three weeks' time the voting papers will be going out to members of BAFTA... it's crucial for us, in this increasingly competitive environment, to continue to show the excellence of our output. And in order to do that the department needs to be well represented in the membership of BAFTA."

The memo goes on to outline charges — a mere £130 a year for the lowest paid staff in the industry. However, it adds helpfully, it may be possible to get BAFTA to waive the additional £50 entrance fee "if enough people want to join".

As befits an organisation headed by the chairman and managing director of John Birt Productions Ltd, the memo goes on to note that "membership costs are tax deductible". It fails to mention that such benefits would only be available to the privileged few to whom the BBC extends Schedule D tax status (ie self-employment) — mostly senior execs and management consultants.

UPROAR greeted the announcement in the BBC's news and current affairs department that Nick Witchell, the breakfast TV presenter, is to be the next Middle East correspondent.

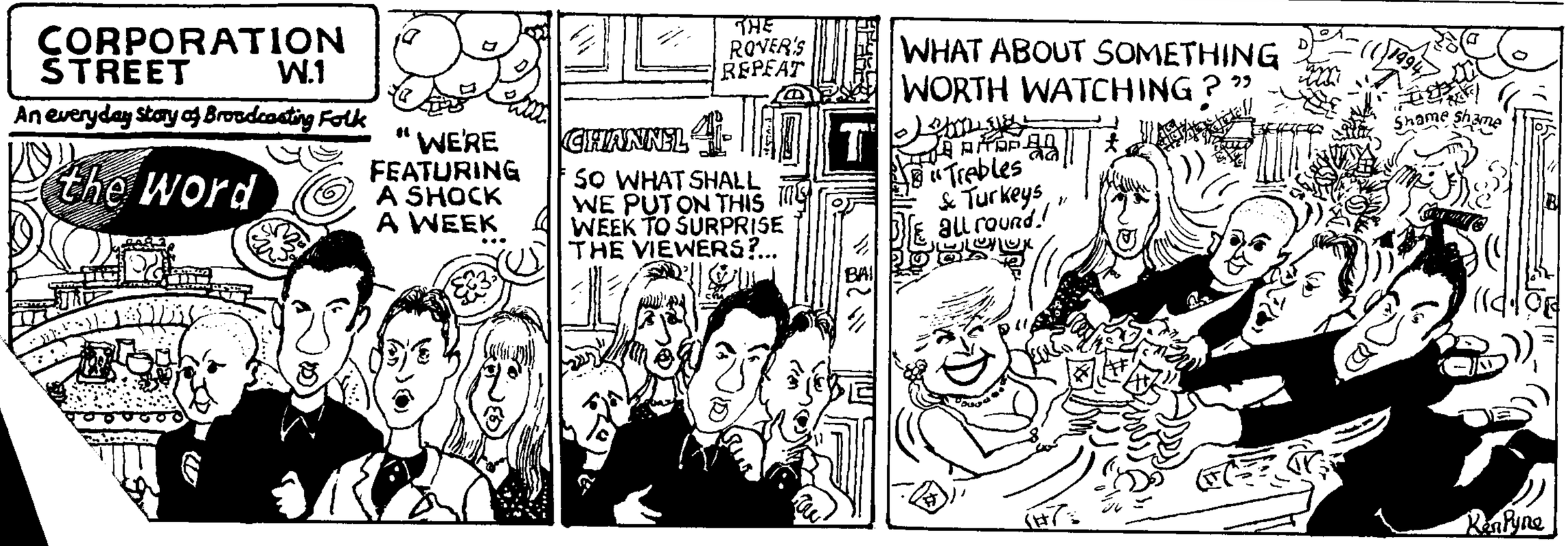
Only weeks before, the Beeb's kind-hearted head of newsgathering, Chris "Scarface" Cramer, had declared that anybody wanting to be considered for such a post would have to be put through a selection board as part of the new Birtist policy of "justice for all".

When Carrothead's appointment was announced, outraged hacks stormed into Cramer's office at TV Centre to complain about this gross instance of double standards. They pointed out that Witchell had not been a reporter for the past ten years, which time he had largely spent perched on a pile of telephone directories in the studio reading from an autocue.

Cramer responded in Birtian fashion stating it was "managerially essential" for him to have the right to override certain procedures. As a sop he said there was a vacancy to mind the shop in Jerusalem until Witchell took over in September 1994. But any candidates would have to go before a selection board...

The subsequent investigation saw her peel away lawyer after lawyer of pederastic horror, resisting her superiors' efforts to keep her from discovering the involvement of a retired senior officer in a paedophile ring.

Review of 'Prime Suspect 3'
Evening Standard


CORPORATION STREET W.1
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
the Word
"WE'RE FEATURING A SHOCK A WEEK..."
THE ROVER'S REPEAT
CHANNEL 4
SO WHAT SHALL WE PUT ON THIS WEEK TO SURPRISE THE VIEWERS?...
WHAT ABOUT SOMETHING WORTH WATCHING?"
1994
Shame Shame
"Trebles & Turkeys all round!"
Ken Pyne

NOTICE BORES

CABARET (Donmar)

"Cabaret is back in town and this time they've got it exactly right."
Clive Hirschhorn, Sunday Express

"... the evening falls utterly flat..."
Maureen Paton, Daily Express

—o—

"Makes you realise how totally miscast Liza Minnelli was."
Edward Seckerson, Independent

"Alas, no one can out-Minnelli Liza Minnelli — least of all Ms Horrocks..."
Maureen Paton, Daily Express

THE decision by BBC TV not to transmit its planned two-hour drama documentary on the Colin Wallace affair has been put down — very conveniently — to a change in programme control higher management. In fact it is a tribute to the power in the BBC of the intelligence services, and the pusillanimity of the BBC's managing director, Will Wyatt.

Wyatt intervened long after the script had been commissioned, written and paid for. He sought the advice of two of his staff men who, he said, were "most experienced in Northern Ireland affairs" — Peter Taylor and John Ware. Perhaps he did not know that Taylor built up his reputation among the great and good at the BBC by rubbishing John Stalker, while Ware has shown how safe a pair of hands he has by rubbishing Colin Wallace (see *Eyes passim*).

To no one's surprise, Ware and Taylor advised that the script was unsafe and that the programme should not go ahead as planned. Wyatt agreed, but was embarrassed by the determination of Richard Broke, executive producer of BBC1's *Screen One*, who had commissioned the script and insisted there was nothing wrong with it. In his support Broke drummed up several testimonials for Wallace from important people. These were so powerful that Wyatt was stuck.

A happy solution came with the "replacement" of Broke by Margaret Mathieson, who promptly axed the programme. Wyatt whimpered that "it is not proper to lay an uncorroborated version of events before the public". This remarkable revelation (the BBC is always doing just that, provided no one "upstairs" is upset) overlooks the fact that one central theme of Wallace's story — that he was wrongly sacked by the army after mysterious and probably corrupt intervention in his civil service appeals tribunal by unnamed intelligence officers — has been corroborated by her majesty's government, which has paid Wallace £30,000 compensation.

Wallace's other claim — that he was wrongly convicted of the manslaughter of his friend Jonathan Lewis — is also corroborated by a pile of new evidence, much of which is still being considered by the home office.

Wyatt used to be an investigative journalist and an author who did not accept received wisdom at face value. He once produced a radio programme on the A6 murder which took the view that James Hanratty was wrongly hanged for it. He also wrote a book about B. Traven, the radical American author, which refused to accept the established half-truths about Traven's origins.

THE *Eldorado* fiasco has a happy ending: the £1.5 million site at Coin, southern Spain, and the £500,000 worth of editing equipment paid for by British TV licence payers and left behind by the BBC, are now being used to edit Spanish porn films.

The site where the crap soap was filmed, a mock Spanish village complete with artificial lake, has reverted to JDT Productions, the Spanish holding company set up by Verity Lambert and the BBC in a bid to save money and taxes.

Appropriately, in Spanish the initials JDT mean "fuck you", as in *jodete*. And a recent visitor to the site was astounded to see people doing exactly that — on celluloid, anyway — as a string of soft-porn films were being edited.

James Tedesco, who along with the blameless John Dark is joint owner of JDT Productions, has a well-founded reputation as a wide boy who dabbles in a number of interesting areas, one of which is porn films.

Meanwhile the court case brought by eight *Eldorado* actors against JDT Productions, Verity Lambert and the BBC for monies owed — around £300,000 — has been adjourned until next March. Trips by star-struck British morons to the former *Eldorado* site continue, guided by actor Franco Rey (on a pathetic retainer), the fans not realising the exciting new "adult" use to which the site is put.

MUSIC NEWS

FRANCE'S gain was Britain's loss when Nicholas Snowman left Ircam, Pierre Boulez's Paris-based music research institute, to work at London's South Bank Centre.

With millions of francs poured into Ircam by the French government, Snowman was the director in charge of its business side. Such was his acumen that despite the generous grant Ircam was soon *dans le chocolat* and Snowman looking for a job.

He found one as bureaucrat-in-chief at the British equivalent of Ircam, the extremely well-funded South Bank Centre. He is now busily spending taxpayers money at the rate of £13.5 million a year, while berating the three excellent symphony orchestras that use his premises for their alleged poor standards, and pontificating on the profligacy of the Arts Council's £2.25 million grant to them.

Snowman believes their Arts Council funds would be better employed supporting his own pet projects, which mostly seem to consist of dreaming up events that might not interest the public. At least that was the position until the most recent Arts Council about-turn on 15 December when it became clear the Hoffman inquiry had come up with the wrong conclusion.

It was supposed to recommend a candidate to be the new "super-orchestra", and that orchestra was to be Snowman's personal favourite, the London Philharmonic. Instead, the inquiry narrowly favoured giving the enhanced funds to the Philharmonia, and while they were about it criticised Snowman's attempts to mark the cards in a supposedly "fair" contest.

Unfortunately, while Snowman's skulduggery cut no ice with Sir Leonard Hoffman, and possibly cost the LPO some goodwill in the process, the mandarins at Great Peter Street were a different matter. Snowman threatened legal proceedings, planted stories in the press about the Philharmonia merging with the LPO, and even managed to twist the arm of one Anthony Camden into saying that the inquiry had got it wrong. And guess what? The inquiry caved in: the LPO and the Philharmonia take away grants of £700,000, the RPO gets £300,000 and Snowman gets another £400,000 to add to his pile of money.

But do not despair completely, for it can be revealed that Mr Snowman has been looking for another job. He applied for the general directorships at the Royal Opera House and English National Opera, and the controller post at BBC Radio 3. By some strange oversight they failed to show any enthusiasm for his applications. Nor did Glyndebourne, which apparently saved him the bother of a stamp by telling him in advance *not* to apply. Snowman currently has two applications in the pipeline for administrative positions in Europe. Lunchtime wishes him well...

WHILE the Arts Council's axing of London orchestras has been getting blanket coverage, less attention has been paid to orchestral manoeuvres north of the border.

At the recent agm of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the chairman, Donald Macdonald, came under pressure from the players to justify the ever-increasing expense imposed on the orchestra by a swelling army of grey-suited administrators. They now absorb 46 per cent of the orchestra's Arts Council grant, or 17 per cent of the total turnover — an increase of more than 1 per cent every year for the past five years.

Meanwhile, the number of bookings for the orchestra has been allowed to dwindle. In September it had only three days' work; in November only one week. The administrative staff, on the other hand, increased to 18 in the last financial year (as against nine in 1985), and now enjoys a ratio of one administrator to every two musicians.

Its nearest competitor in Scotland, the Scottish Ensemble, admittedly a smaller band, manages with a permanent staff of just one — which didn't stop it from scooping a £250,000 a year sponsorship deal from British Telecom last year from under the noses of the purveyors of marketing-speak in the palatial offices of the SCO. The SCO's equivalent in London, the English Chamber Orchestra, manages with five full-time staff and two part-time.

There was further embarrassment at the agm when James Ivory, a stockbroker on the board of the SCO, turned out to have invested £15,000 of the orchestra's remaining money in Queen's Moat Houses plc, which all but collapsed earlier this year. He was quick to insist that, in spite of appearances to the contrary, his financial judgement was "actually jolly good".

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

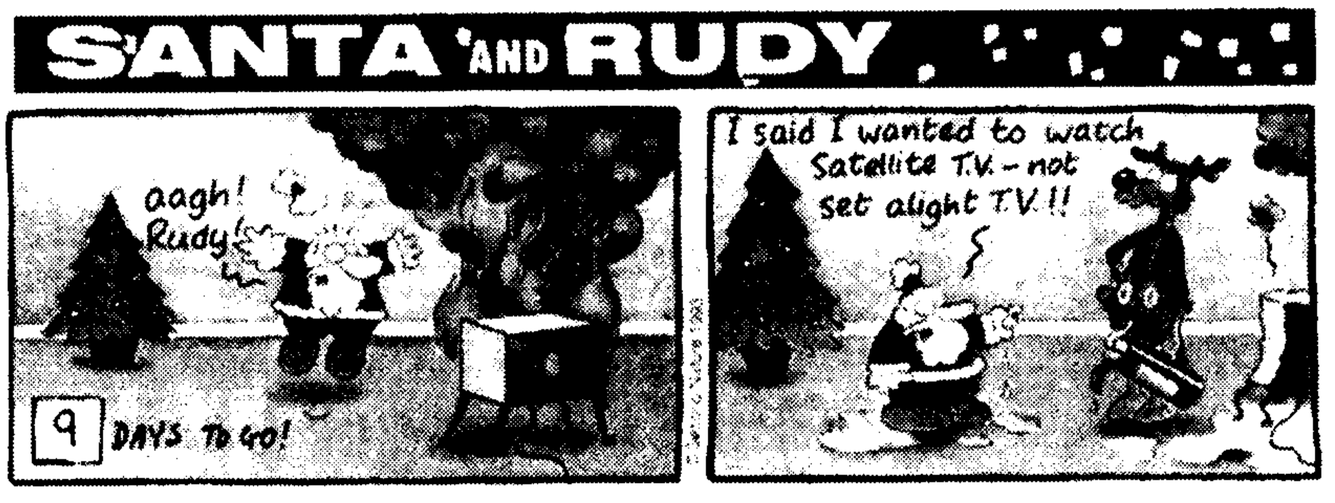
BBC staff from around the country are being summoned to "meet the management" pep-talks in London. The cost is quoted as "about £40 per head", but this ignores the cost of having staff out of the system for a day — which, with 24,000 employees, is not cheap.

People attending from remoter parts of the Birt empire are put up in the St George's Hotel, Langham Place, where the nightly rate for a single room is £105, excluding breakfast.

Attendance at these brainwashing sessions is compulsory: anyone failing to turn up is reported to their head of department. One inducement offered for coming is a glossy "Staff Guide" to the BBC, a cringe-making compilation which seems to be aimed at people with a reading age of about 10.

The highlight of this ludicrous volume is a section which enables staff, using only scissors and glue, to "Make Yourself a BBC Coat of Arms". Are you sitting comfortably, children?

I-BSkyB



The Sun

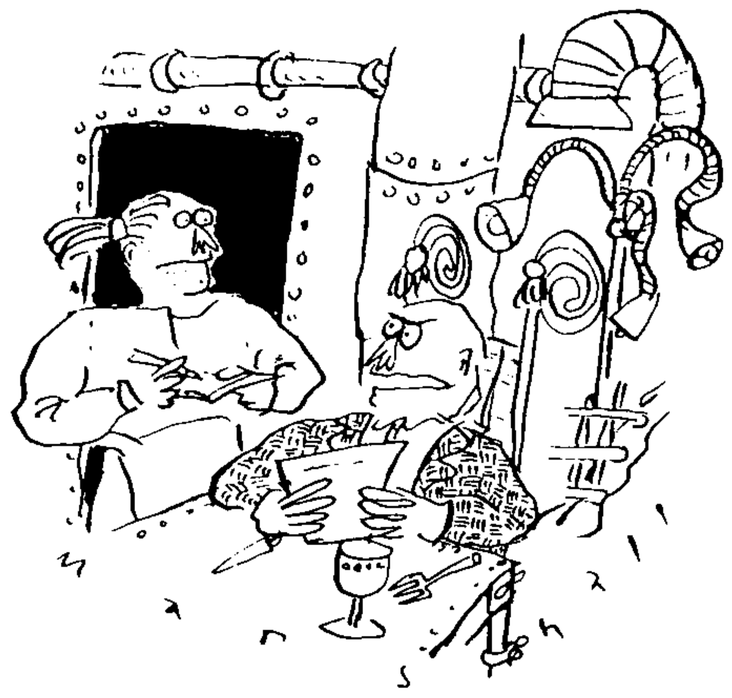
CULT CORNER

EVEN the lucrative world of cults has been hit by recession: a state of emergency has been declared at Saint Hill Manor, headquarters of the "church" of Scientology.

Documents show that some parts of the organisation are struggling from one "financial flap" to another, with desperate pleas from the cult's "Sea Org" for cash to meet bills.

The cult, which charges thousands of pounds for its courses, was at one stage within a whisker of having its phone lines disconnected over non-payment of a £15,000 bill. Nor is it too popular with the landlord of its controversial Dianetics bookshop in East Grinstead who threatened to eviction unless the rent was paid.

Even m' learned friends have had trouble. One silk threatened not to turn up to conduct a vital and imminent high court action unless the cult settled an £8,000-plus bill within 24 hours.



"Waiter, I demand to see the architect!"

SALLY DEEDES

AS PREDICTED and universally acknowledged, British Telecom has bungled its numbering system most gloriously (*Eye* 836).

As one insider declared: "It is an unholy shambles, squandering numbers over areas that don't need them, such as small Hebredian islands, when large conurbations such as Leeds and Sheffield are fast running out of numbers. London will have to have a second change before the end of the decade."

There are two solutions to the mess. The first is the "extra digit before the number" option. According to experts, this would be extremely expensive since the network only examines the first four digits of any number. It would result in a huge reprogramming of equipment costing millions — and make present hardware redundant.

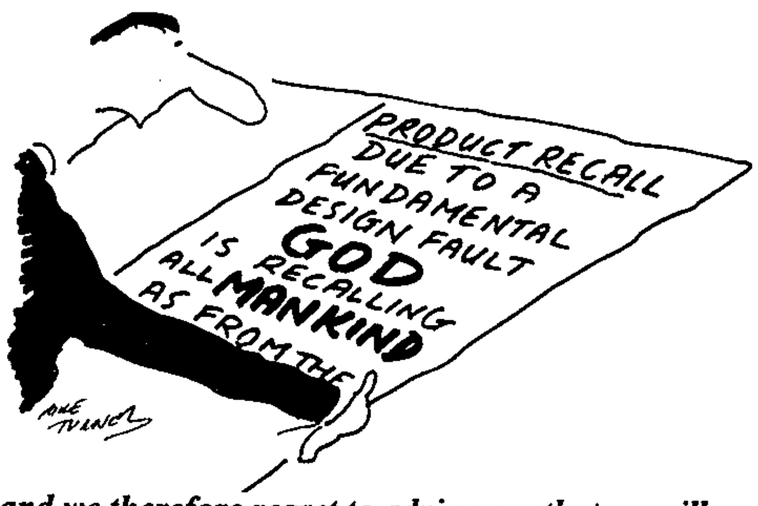
The other choice is a "digit to the code after the first four numbers", which would give every code 10 times as many numbers and be cheaper.

The second option was the idea of BT's then head of network strategy, Arthur Orbell. The problem then shifted to OFTEL for its technical director to sort out as soon as possible. The name of the director? A newly appointed Arthur Orbell.

At the beginning of December, it was announced that Mr Orbell would be retiring at the end of the month and that he had been asked to take over the National Code Change. As one cynic pointed out: "He's the one who got us into this mess and therefore he's the only one who can't blame his predecessor."

FOR the last 10 years reader Mrs Black has insured her holiday home in the Isle of Wight with General Accident in Leicester.

Though she has never made a claim, she received the following letter last month: "We note that the policy falls due for renewal and that this property is a holiday home. We have no trace of having a policy that covers your main residence



and we therefore regret to advise you that we will not be advising renewal."

According to General Accident's head office, the reason for this unchivalrous response is "due to the recession and the problems that it has brought with it concerning fire and theft. Leicester has had a particularly bad experience in this field. We would need the main residence as a reasonable risk to offset the other."

But no claim has ever been made by this customer. The policy applies "irrespective of the claimant's history" — or loyalty, apparently.

ONE Saturday John Franklin intended to send a small packet containing two computer discs by British Rail's Red Star service.

When he handed it in at Carlisle, to be collected at Glasgow some 100 miles away, he was told that it would cost him a staggering £142 as the next train would be leaving after midday.

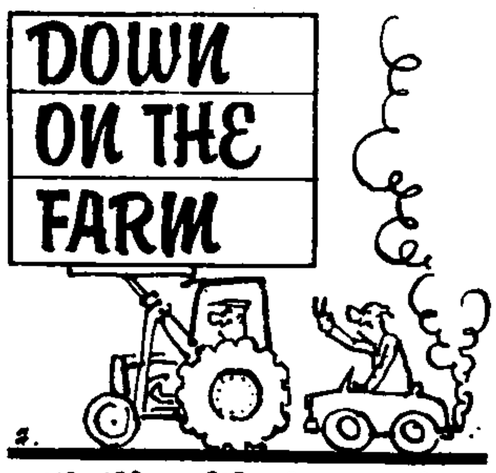
Why such an exorbitant cost to travel on a train that would be going to Glasgow with or without the package? Red Star told me that from midday on Saturday to 6am on a Monday morning, there are only six or so Red Star stations open — Glasgow being one of them.

"What we would have to do is to send a courier down to Carlisle to the address of the customer in order to collect the parcel and deliver it to the Red Star office in Glasgow."

But surely if the train was going to Glasgow, wouldn't it be cheaper for the parcel to be left with the guard and delivered to the Red Star office straight from the train?

"You would have to reach an agreement with the guard concerned and do it at your own risk."

Could privatisation put an end to such a rip off, I wonder?



with 'New Muckspreader'

NEW year's honours rarely reflect the fine contribution so many individuals and organisations make to the agriculture industry, which makes it necessary for the industry to award its own honours. *New Muckspreader* was privileged to attend the committee's deliberations.

Top of the agenda was **John Selwyn Gummer**. Such is the esteem with which he is regarded, the committee felt he deserved a special award for moving to the department of the environment.

The judges considered a kind offer from the Norwegian embassy to supply a golden *drittsekk*, engraved with a list of Mr Gummer's positive achievements, but the idea drew a blank. An alternative offer of another pond, to balance Mr Gummer's garden, so levelling the playing field, was rejected outright. It was felt that the meat, eggs and poultry conglomerate, Hillsdown Holdings, might be offended.

In the event, judges settled for the presentation of a postcard from one of the EC's intervention stores — a huge shed full of dead meat — with the inscription "Wish you were here".

Sheep farmers insisted that Gummer's replacement, **Mrs Gillian Shepherd**, should also be recognised for her imaginative treatment of their concerns over nerve-gas based sheep-dips.

The Head-In-The-Sand Award is on its way to Whitehall Place. Owing to the generosity of the agriculture training board, which sponsors the award out of profits from statutory training courses to sheep dippers, judges will not be requiring the return of the bucket of sand. She can use it when next doling out help to hill farmers.

It was also felt that the egregious **Keith Meldrum**, the government's chief veterinary officer and founder member of the four million dead birds can't be wrong club, deserved a mention.

Egg producers were lost in admiration that the head of a department that has slaughtered so many birds to no effect should remain in place to collect a £49,000 salary. But as he will doubtless collect a gong from his grateful government for his incompetence, a formal prize was felt to be superfluous.

The Utter Bastards award went unanimously to another of Mr Meldrum's departments, the **meat hygiene division**. Its unmitigated arrogance and contempt of parliament in advertising for a £60,000 a year chief executive to run the national meat hygiene service, before even its establishment has been approved, is seen as a role model for the rest of the civil service.

Although Mr Meldrum's troops have long regarded the legislature as a trivial irritation, it was felt their arrogance had scaled new heights. A family-sized packet of condoms will be presented to the division allowing it to continue doing to the meat industry what is has been doing for years but minimising the risk of infection.

There was some debate about what to offer Prince Charles's fat friend and apologist, **Nicholas Soames**. For his enthusiasm and imagination in closing down more than 200 slaughterhouses under the pretext of adopting the EC fresh meat hygiene directive 91/497, while claiming that their owners had "made a commercial decision not to invest in the future of their businesses", Soames has been awarded the coveted Destruction of British Industry Medal, the first person outside the DTI to be so honoured.

The **public health laboratory service** (PHLS) was applauded for its sterling work in promoting the consumption of poultry meat and eggs, and the committee recommended that its name should go forward as the organisation which had contributed most to the success of the food export initiative — to the Dutch product board, which has doubled its sales of eggs on the British market.

Sir Jerry Wiggin and his agriculture select committee also took a commendation, for failing to recognise the disaster in the meat industry and leaving MAFF a clear run at destroying small producers without the interference of mere MPs.

The Poultry Regulations Advisory Trust citation went abroad — for the most fatuous piece of legislation of the year. The winner was the **EC veterinary committee**, for its proposal that eggs should be kept below 22°C at all times, even during the height of summer, a proposal which will require the air conditioning of hen houses.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

SINCE WE CAME ON THIS FRENCH TRIP OUR WAYNE'S DONE NOTHIN' BUT PANIC ABOUT RABIES GEORGE!
LIVESTOCK
HE'S BLOODY TERRIFIED! HE'S CONVINCED HE'LL GET IT WHILE HE'S OVER HERE. I WISH YOU'D HAVE A WORD.
DAFT BUGGER!! LEAVE IT TO ME LUV. I'LL PUT HIM STRAIGHT
YOU'LL BE ALRIGHT PROVIDED YOU USE A CONDOM SON!

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

MURKEYSIDE

AN ALL-PARTY group of Liverpool councillors visiting Tower Hamlets to investigate neighbourhood councils were taken aback to hear their Lib Dem colleagues praised for having taught their counterparts in east London how to write election leaflets.

While accusations have flown that Lib Dem leaflets in Tower Hamlets helped the British National party's election triumph in Millwall, the Liverpool connection relates to a row in the city over a Lib Dem leaflet put out in the predominantly black Granby ward.

The leaflet talked about a housing redevelopment in terms of "ethnic cleansing". Labour councillors have complained to Paddy Ashdown over the unnecessary introduction of the race issue, albeit this time with the scouse Lib Dems pandering to the fears of the *black* community.

Attack being the best means of defence, Liverpool's Lib Dems have in turn complained to Jack Straw about a Labour leaflet. The leaflets war proves beyond doubt just how impossible a Lib-Lab electoral pact would be.

NORTH WILTSHIRE

THANKS to the high-handed behaviour of the RAF in turning the disused wartime airfield at Colerne into a noise dump, the ministry of defence faces an *intifada* of local residents.

They are infuriated by the din caused by the primitive small aircraft used to give free flying lessons to potential recruits and joyriding to teenagers. Protesters, known as RAFNAG (RAF Noise Abatement Group), plan to appeal to the parliamentary ombudsman on a case of maladministration.

They cite the lack of consultation with local authorities prior to the reopening of the airfield; favouritism for Colerne village (which is not overflown) as a result of a NIMBY deal between the RAF and Peter Wilson, chairman of Colerne parish council (*Eye* 832); and the misinformation of residents who live on the outskirts of Colerne and were originally told that they would not be overflown.

This "unfortunate" error has been admitted by the defence under secretary, Lord Cranborne, who has also apologised profusely to the MP for Northavon, Sir John Cope, for the lack of local consultation. Cranborne, however, still resolutely denies (*Eye* 834) the NIMBY deal with Colerne, thus effectively calling local Tory chieftain Peter Wilson a liar.

CORNWALL

AN INTERESTING aspect of the north Cornwall planning fiasco (*Eye* 835) is that although malpractice had been going on for years and everyone in the area knew about it, not once did the local media bring the facts to light.

The *Cornish Guardian*, which claims to cover north Cornwall, attends planning meetings and publishes lists of applications. But it never saw anything strange in them, nor did its gormless hacks ever pick up the slightest hint of impropriety.

The *Western Morning News* — "the newspaper with the stories that the London papers miss" — carried not a single story about planning anomalies, such as large houses belonging to planning officials appearing on greenfield sites.

BBC TV and the now defunct Television South West both had nightly programmes covering the area, but never once touched on the subject. And yet an independent, London-based television company, Twenty Twenty Vision, sent a researcher to North Cornwall and, within a fortnight, had no difficulty putting together a startling tale of farm labourer's bungalows with helicopter pads, granny annexes without grannies, and a host of other dubious planning consents, that culminated in an excellent exposé and an official inquiry.

Perhaps an inquiry is needed into why the sleepy heads in the local media were so useless at protecting local interests.

LEWISHAM

TONY LEAR, would-be chief executive of Labour-controlled Lewisham, has quit before taking up his £87,000-a-year post following an interesting memo from outgoing incumbent Terry Hanafin.

Hanafin informed his boss, Lewisham leader Margaret Moran, that Lear's appointment by a committee of 25 councillors wasn't quite as tickety boo as it should have been.

Two of the interviewing Labour members, Ian Arnold and ex-leader Dave Sullivan, had previously won contracts worth £80,000 to carry out training consultancy work for the environmental services department which Lear used to run in Brent — where else? — a factette not revealed at the interview and one which may be in breach of local government law.

Lewisham must now find a new chief executive. Cost of the cock-up to long-suffering chargepayers: £14,000.

LAMBETH

IT MUST be comforting for pupils of Lambeth's Dick Sheppard secondary school to know that their debt-ridden local authority is closing the school down for "failing its pupils".

According to the council's already discredited equal opportunities drive, the school's large number of "disadvantaged" pupils (64 per cent are categorised as allegedly poor; 68 per cent, black) requires that Dick Sheppard should provide a better standard of education than now available.

But Lambeth has not yet bothered to tell anyone to which schools Dick Sheppard's disenfranchised pupils will now be sent — nor why it should bear the brunt of Lambeth's pique when few other schools in the borough match its facilities (which include a swimming pool) and most have even higher levels of truancy and exam failure.

It couldn't have anything to do with secret plans to relocate the council's education offices in the soon-to-be-vacant site, could it?

Philipps fish washer, 12 place setting. Give the wife an early Christmas present, bargain £50.

Stirling News

"... Well, if you get your big step-brother onto me, I'll get my mother's live-in partner onto him!"

PROPERTY NEWS

BITTERSWEET news for residents of Kingsway Court, a crumbling 60s apartment block near Brighton, whose freehold is owned by the Mars group.

The block needs repairs costing £1.5 million, and Mars wants the 100-odd residents to contribute around £15,000 per flat. It recently took two tenant representatives, Kenneth Lane and John Scott, to the high court, hoping that the decision could be used as a precedent against leaseholders nationally. But how representative of the tenants are the two tenant representatives?

Astonishingly Mars is paying Lane's and Scott's legal costs. By another amazing coincidence, Lane and Scott are directors of a company set up to buy Kingsway Court's freehold from Mars — the freehold's value having increased from £80,000 10 years ago to £500,000.

News that the plaintiffs were paying the defendants' costs failed to impress the judge, Mr Justice Rattee, who refused to give Mars the declaration it wanted, saying the case was a waste of time and money and an abuse of the court process.

Despite this Mars helpfully provided Kingsway Court residents with a notice, locked in a glass case, which proclaimed "Mars Wins High Court Battle", a move described by Rattee as "getting very close to contempt of court".

So far Mars has spent £150,000 on the case to no avail, and has seized a £10,000 maintenance fund, built up by the leaseholders, to cover its admin costs.

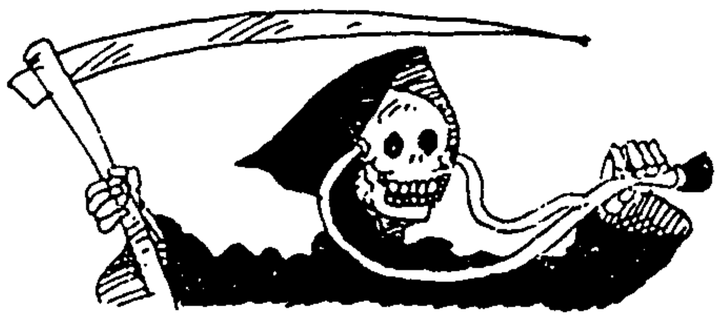
STUDENTS

MIDDLESEX "university" is offering people the chance to graduate from a university never having set foot inside one.

Those who graduated just before the college obtained university status are being allowed to have a certificate stating that they are graduates of Middlesex "university" rather than plain old "polytechnic".

However, those unwilling to pay £40 for the privilege will have to make do with genuine qualifications.

Oi. what are you doin'?
BAR
Im makin' my new Years resolution.
What is it?
To drink more than I did last year! Two more pints barman, quick



DOING THE ROUNDS

HAPPY new year to the three surgical senior house-officers at Enfield's busy Chase Farm hospital who are still operating on a one-in-three 3 rota: ie every third night and weekend on call in addition to 50 hours a week of daytime duty.

Every third week, they are on duty for 120 hours including the mammoth continuous 82-hour weekend shift which Mrs Bottomley assured us had vanished from the health service in April 1993.

● IN 1992, Mrs Bottomley dismissed Mr Mawson, the director of medical services at **Ashworth psychiatric hospital**, after he refused to cooperate with an inquiry that upheld allegations of mistreatment of patients by staff under his control. Mr Mawson has resurfaced as a locum consultant at **Broadmoor**, working alongside the acting director medical services, Dr Margaret Cairns Orr. Such is the trust Dr Orr places in her colleague that he stood in for her at a recent conference.

● **NORTH Herts NHS trust** is ploughing ahead with a private contract with the Swiss based firm UNI Clinical Laboratories (UCL) to provide pathology services, much against the wishes of consultants and other staff (*Eye* 814). The takeover dates back to November 1991, when pathologists were asked to meet representatives of Cambridge Management and Marketing (CMM) and Capita, a venture capital organization, to discuss ways of raising extra revenue for the trust and laboratory.

The CMM and Capita recommendation, that the laboratory should be run by a new private company (NEWCO), was rejected by the pathologists in a meeting with trust chief executive, R. Ewings, on 4 June 1992. A week later, Mr Ewings asked them to meet representatives from UCL, who arrived with the same managers from CMM and Capita. The proposal, that the service should be contracted out to UCL for 10 years, was endorsed by Mr Ewings but again rejected by the staff.

To ensure fair play and a full exploration of the options, the service was put out to tender and six companies, including the **Lister's** own high quality laboratory, were invited to bid. UCL, the surprise winners, were again represented in their bid by CMM whose director, Alan Howard, is now an employee of UCL. UCL has since miraculously produced £2 million to fund a new post-graduate centre for the hospital. This has not assuaged the anger of the staff nor Professor Peter Lachmann, president of the Royal College of Pathologists, who provided four independent assessors on the stipulation that the trust would not proceed with any bid they felt was incompatible with the maintenance of a high standard of service. Their conclusion, that this was the case with the UCL bid, was ignored by Ewings, who subsequently circulated a letter to all GPs serviced by the trust implying that the RCP assessors concurred with the decision. No detailed financial information is available about UCL, whose pathology service will not be consultant-led as at present. Last year, parent company Unilabs revealed that after four years' trading in the highly lucrative private market in Europe, it did not make a net profit.

● **DERBY city hospital NHS trust** has released details of its staffing profile as from May of this year: 22 senior managers, 247 administrative and clerical staff and 108 medical and dental staff. Patients are now two and a half times more likely to see a manager than a doctor. Meanwhile, **Bradford health authority** is advertising for a £18,000 a year "smoking worker" to complete its team on the new Heartsmart unit.

● SIX MONTHS AGO, **South Glamorgan health authority** suspended orthopaedic surgeon Ian Mackie after he refused to use a type of artificial hip joint he felt was untried and untested. SGHA has yet to set a date for his hearing. Hopefully the matter will be resolved more swiftly than the case of Bridget O'Donnel, who is still awaiting a conclusive hearing after her suspension by **North East Thames RHA** 11 years ago (*Eye* 835). **Northern RHA** has sacked Mr Balwant Singh, consultant and deputy director of the ear, nose and throat department at **Furness general hospital**. After three and a half years' service during which he never took more than three days' leave at a time, was never off sick and once did four weeks of continuous duty, Mr Singh was dismissed with no reason given.

● **BIRMINGHAM'S Royal Orthopaedic hospital (ROH)** has cut its waiting list in half, treated 28 percent more patients than last year and turned a loss into a healthy profit. The £20 million indebted **South Birmingham health authority** has therefore decided to close it, transferring patients to nearby **Selly Oak hospital** except those needing very specialist treatment, who will be forced to travel to **Nottingham, Stoke** or **Oxford**. The ROH is in good company: also set to go in a 1,500 bed-cutting blitz in Birmingham are the **Children's hospital, the Eye hospital**, the **Skin hospital**, the **Women's hospital** and the **Smethick Neurosurgery hospital**. Parts of the Children's hospital are due to be handily relocated in **Coventry**.

West Midlands regional health authority meanwhile has found the resources to distribute 5,000 copies of the glossy *West Midlands Health*, funded by adverts from hospitals and packed with recent achievements. As chief executive Brian Edwards put it: "I am unashamed of wanting to tell the community of the good things we are doing." No space is found within the 100 pages to mention the £10 million WMRHA wasted on the unsuitable computers (Health Track), management consultancy (URG Research Group), unrealizable pensions (QA business services), corporate entertainment and Sir James Ackers' redundancy bonus.

● THE controversial replacement of a cardiac ambulance with a taxi at **Ulster hospital** has been scrapped. A doctor and nurse will now be rushed out to patients with chest pain in a specially converted Ford Maverick. Elsewhere, Sam Nullatamby has resigned as director of mental health and learning disability services at **Northampton's St Crispin hospital** for personal reasons. Sam, who is alleged to have used three hospital cars for his family, is to be given six months' severance pay. "I am going to Mauritius where my family have a bakery business," he said. St Crispin's is currently £170,000 in debt.

● THE border town of **Hay-on-Wye** has again been split by the health reforms. Patients on the **Powys health authority** side can have orthopaedic operations at **Hereford General Hospital** within weeks, those on the **Herefordshire health authority** side have to wait 18 months. As consultant surgeon Mr Vic Seal put it; "I can only operate on Hereford patients if their GP is a fundholder because the health authority has no money for cold cases."

M.D.

GREAT CONWOMEN No 94

JENNY ANNE GOULD, the "Purley Queen", has reared her ugly head again (see *Eye* 808).

Since the mid-1980s she has run several companies (from her home address in Purley Rise, Purley) producing desk diaries and yearbooks for charities and selling advertising space in them for a 50 per cent commission. Gould's company recovers commission from the charities upfront, while it has no responsibility for recovering monies from advertisers.

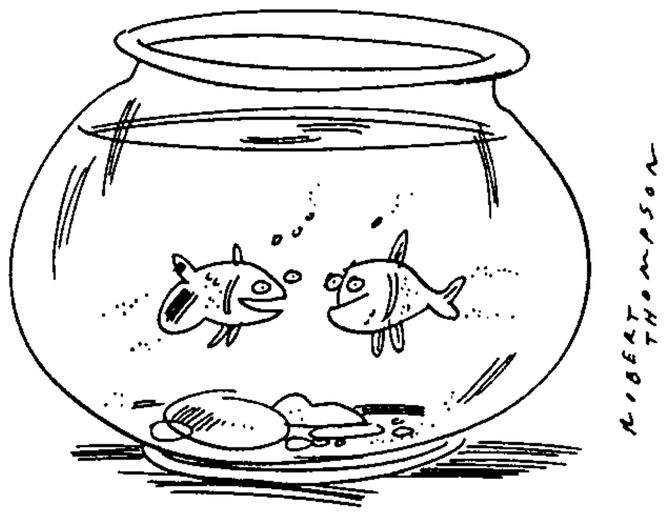
She started with J.A. Gould Limited in 1986. This ceased trading and was replaced by Creative Images (UK) Ltd, which went into liquidation in 1990. Another Gould vehicle, called Creative Images Ltd, also went into liquidation in 1990. It was replaced by Strategic Sales Initiative Ltd, which ceased trading in August 1992.

When we reported Gould's activities in December 1992, she was using a company called Ultimate Creations Limited. This too has since gone into liquidation. She has enjoyed the services of liquidator Neville Richard Eckley for the last three companies.

Mrs Gould should be on the public enemy list of the Inland Revenue and HM customs and excise, both of whom have been substantial creditors in her liquidated companies. She should also carry a health warning to charities.

Sense has lost more than £30,000 in dealing with Mrs Gould, while Bob Hirons of the British Sports Association for the Disabled testified at Croydon county court that the BSAD had written off £170,000 over two years in respect of advertising sold by Mrs Gould. The Charity Commission served Ultimate Creations with a "directive to disclose all information about their work" earlier this year, but it went into voluntary liquidation before it had to comply.

Mrs Gould's latest wheeze is to change her company and her surname. The latest company, Micaforce Limited, was set up in April 1993. Its address is the same as all her previous companies. However, the Companies House form 288 has been signed by one Jenny Anne Coomber, who has the same date of birth as Jenny Anne Gould. Yet the "previous surnames" section has been left blank, while the "other directorships" section has a "none" in it, even though Jenny Anne Gould was still a director of Ultimate Creations Limited at the time of signing this document.



"Well, nice talking to you... must circulate"

CIRCUMCISION NEWS

MARIE STOPES, the pioneer of family planning in Britain, has been renting out bedrooms, staff and an operating theatre to Farouk Siddiqui, the doctor struck off by the general medical council (GMC) for attempting to carry out a female circumcision. Marie Stopes was aware of the allegations.

Female circumcision was outlawed in the United Kingdom in 1985. If Siddiqui is prosecuted by police and found guilty, he could face a prison sentence of five years.

Siddiqui was exposed by the *Sunday Times* for negotiating female circumcision with a reporter posing as a client. Despite the accusations, Marie Stopes continued to allow him to perform TOPs (termination of pregnancies) at its Whitehouse abortion clinic in Cricklewood, north London.

Marie Stopes rented out facilities to Siddiqui about one Saturday morning in four. Helen Axby, UK director of Marie Stopes, said: "Last year, there appeared to be no case to answer. Journalistic evidence is very different to legal evidence and police investigations following the report proved nothing. Now that he has been found guilty by his professional association, he will no longer have operating rights in our clinics."

No doctor has been successfully prosecuted for female circumcision in the UK. Police need to receive a complaint to investigate alleged offences, and the illegality of female circumcision means complaints are non-existent except by third parties such as lobby groups. Dr Siddiqui was never charged because, says Scotland Yard, an official complaint was never made about him.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

THE European Union's plan to spend £15 billion a year from 1994 to create 15 million new jobs by the year 2000 promises even bigger bucks for crooks who cheat the handout system.

Despite widescale fraud, there is still no effective mechanism in the "union" to counter it. The anti-fraud brigade set up by the European Commission six years ago became overwhelmed reading bogus accounts and asked for an extra 265 staff. It got roughly 15.

UCLAF — *L'Unité de la Coordination de la Lutte Anti-Fraude* — is under the direct control of commission president Jacques "Spend Spend Spend" Delors. The existing anti-fraud computer database, IRENE, doesn't work, and IRENE's replacement, DAF, still does not exist. Forward with Europe indeed!

RADIATION LATEST

PANIC must be spreading at the ministry of defence following its grudging admission in the high court that it was "strictly liable" for the condition of a former civilian worker at its Chatham dockyard who contracted leukaemia after refitting nuclear submarines between 1974 and 1983.

Nearly three years after the *Eye* drew attention to the plight of Rudolph Molinari (*Eye* 757), a judge awarded him damages of £167,000. For the MoD, this represents the tip of an iceberg. Dozens of former dockyard workers are in similar straits, and in many cases the MoD's culpability is likely to go way beyond "strict liability".

Molinari was a classified radiation worker, trained to work on nuclear submarines all year round. As such he was limited to an annual dose of 50 millisieverts of radioactivity. If he reached that limit at any point in the calendar year, he could not do more work that exposed him to radiation until the following year.

While the MoD cynically manipulated the exposure of workers like Molinari to run them as near to the limit as possible by the year end, it was clearly not in the dockyard's interest to use this up at an early stage and have a skilled radiation worker standing idle for months.

So when there was a particularly "dirty" job to be done — one that would run up high doses in a short time — the management did not use trained radiation workers but asked for young volunteers from other sections of the shipyard.

One such was Tim Robson. He was sent in with two others to change the water feed ring on a steam generator — a job that involved sitting on top of the submarine's unshielded reactor. The doses were horrendous. Robson's dose record from the Admiralty radiation records centre shows he received more than the annual limit in just three weeks. He was diagnosed as having non-Hodgkins lymphoma two and a half years ago.

The situation became even worse when Chatham started to close in 1982, and the classified radiation workers were transferred to Devonport. Untrained workers were used for all manner of hazardous tasks. In one extreme case, a radioactive waste tank was removed from a submarine and left uncovered on the side of the dock until three cleaners — with no protection at all — were ordered in to scrub it out. All their clothing and bedding subsequently had to be burned, and they were sent to the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston for decontamination.

Letters

ConspiraTory?

Sir,

As a Marxist I do not of course believe in conspiracy theories. However, in the week that Alan Clark gave evidence on Iraqgate, how did the Tory news managers arrange a spurious peace deal in Ireland, GATT, a crisis in the Israel-Arafat peace deal and the Russian elections?

Yours sincerely,
KEITH FLETT,

Tottenham.

Out to lynch

Sir,

As a reader of some long standing, the most appealing aspect of PRIVATE EYE *to me has been its apparently sincere, if sporadic bursts of crusading for genuine justice and exposures of occasions when the police, paid to uphold the law, break it themselves, as in the case of the Birmingham Six.*

As such, I was interested to read Paul Foot's piece on the George Heron trial (835). One aspect he didn't mention was the media coverage following the verdict. I first heard of the case when the verdict was announced on ITN news and I was struck by the fact that even though he was acquitted, his full name and town of residence were shown, along with his photograph.

Space was given to the victim's family and the police, but none to the defence, and it seemed to me that the clear inference of the report was that he was sprung on a technicality. Reporting of the case in this way, I felt (and still feel), could only encourage the lynch law mentality. My girlfriend and other friends who saw the report felt the same way. It seems that after being found not guilty in open court, George Heron has been tried, found guilty and sentenced to lynching by our unbiased media. Was anyone at ITN "leaned on"? I think we should be told.

Yours,
T.P.DAY,

Dunstable.

PS: I'm bloody angry. I've just heard that suspects are to lose the right to silence. Quis custodiet ipsos custodies? Not ITN, that's for sure.

PPS: Well I thought Newman and Baddiel were funny.

Shit ahoy!

Sir,

Re: "Marchionmess" — PRIVATE EYE, *17.12.93.*

As the lawyer for the owners of the "BOWBELLE", I simply cannot take the credit for preventing Channel Four from recording the three "facts" which you mention. Although I and my clients tried very hard to help Channel Four to produce a fair, balanced and accurate programme, I must have completely failed in this because the result was a programme which, although visually well produced, was grossly unfair and inaccurate.

Quite why the complaints to the Independent Television Commission presented difficulties for the programme makers is hard to imagine. The ITC seem to believe that their obligations only arise once a broadcast has taken place and refused to intervene. A complaint has now been made to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission.

Yours faithfully,
TIM TAYLOR,
Hill, Taylor, Dickinson, London EC3.

Purrrdey...

Sir,

I will not listen to one word against Joanna Lumley! She is gorgeous, lovely and absolutely and completely beautiful! Shame about Cleese and Corbett.

JOHN ILLEGIBLE,

SW1.

Dead famous

Sir,

*I was overjoyed to read in your "Hallo" column (*EYE *834) that Jeremy Beadle, that much maligned wag and master of banal rhetoric, is an avid collector of celebrity autopsy reports.*

I am, myself, a collector of celeb autopsy reports and feel secure at night knowing that old Jerer's has been bitten by the bug as well.

It is worth noting that Mr Beadle's own autopsy report is much sought after, not only by other collectors (who regard Mr Beadle's own autopsy report as the penny black of autopsy reports), but also by many members of the general public.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN CONLIN,

Glasgow.

A Fahd country

Sir,

Re: Your snippet in the Hallo column, EYE *835. It is not Islam at fault — simply the maatawahs who do not read the English language papers published in Saudi Arabia. But then, they read nothing but the Koran. These men are a law unto themselves and should never be confused with the educated and tolerant Saudis of whom there are many. No names — no pack drill; I shall be going back!*

Yours faithfully,
NAME & ADDRESS WITHHELD.

Pip Pip!

Sir,

Have you actually stopped Grovel? I have been unable to find it the last two weeks. I started PRIVATE EYE *15 years ago, for Grovel, and some weeks only read this article. Please please bring it back. Let me know if you actually have decided to end it.*

Yours,
DAVID HEATON,

Wetherby.

Philp

Sir,

*Whilst I appreciate your interest in my departure from Mirror Group Newspapers (*EYE *834), the fact is that it had nothing to do with any legal actions involving the company, least of all the Elton John story which was published whilst I was on holiday. Consequently your reference to David Montgomery and me was quite wrong.*

Yours faithfully,
DAVID PHILP,

London SW11.

Lookalike

Cartland

Blobby

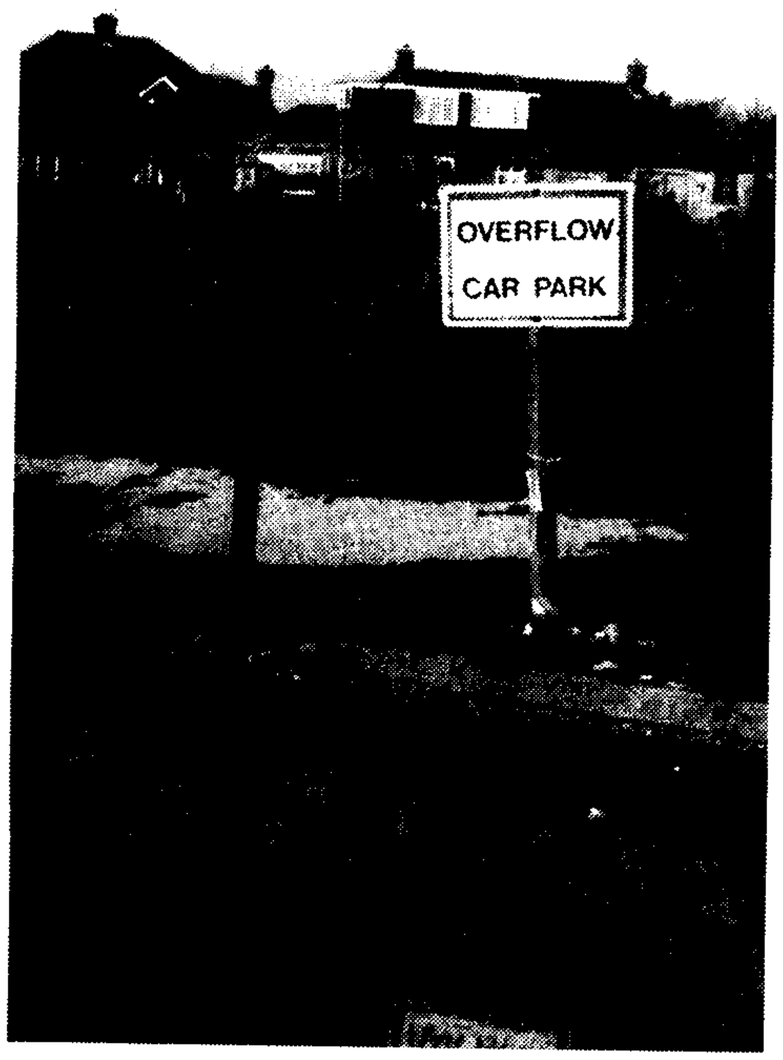
Sir,

Catching sight of this photo on the front page of one our newspapers I naturally thought it must be accompanying an article on that much loved dame — Barbara Cartland. Reading further I found it was a portrait of a Mr Blobby. The resemblance is uncanny. Are they by any chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
R.JONES,

Cambridge.

I-SPY



Submitted by Caroline Holden. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Rhodes scholarship

Sir,

*I think Peter Rhodes (*EYE *834) — of the Wolverhampton* EXPRESS & STAR *— is suffering from either a severe memory problem, or the illusion that those of us who have read that newspaper for many years have a similar affliction.*

I rarely read his ramblings nowadays, which seem to consist mainly of him twittering on about his darling daughter; but I well remember his refusal to accept that the Birmingham Six were not guilty. Towards the end of their ordeal, long after many of the deeply sceptical and justifiably embittered people of this region had to concede that all was not well with their conviction, he did an amazing about-turn. He claimed that he had been persuaded of their innocence after interviewing one of them in prison.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP R NORMAN,
West Midlands.

OPTimum price

Sir,

I note the similarity between the OPT-O-THERM eyepiece heater advertised in Gnome's Xmas Mail Mart and the eyepiece heater available for Arriflex and other professional 16mm cameras. However I see no similarity between the selling price of around £200 for this device and Gnome's bargain price of 3 OPTO-O-THERMs for £11.95.

Yours,
STEVE DOWNER,
Banbury.

Park your balls

Sir,

All good things must come to an end! May I humbly suggest that your organ's obsession with "Ugandan affairs" has reached the end of its useful life. As an alternative, how about using "having a Camilla"?

Yours,
ROB MARSH,
Cambridge.

EXCITING NEW FEATURE AS SEEN IN ALL NEWSPAPERS

WHY I MY

PRIVATE EYE

This week's £25 winning letter

Sir,

Your "Happy Household Hints" is an absolute whizz for people like myself, girls who've had to get married in a hurry and have no idea how to run a home. I mean, "How to time a hard-boiled egg by walking slowly up a 14-story block and then taking the fast lift back down", was a sooper success at our first breakfast as Mr and Mrs! If I follow your advice, I bet hubby won't run off with other women!

Thanks again, EYE!
TRICIA BIRDBRAIN,
Northants.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"They [the IRA] are deadly serious about a cessation of violence."
JOHN HUME, Radio 1
(Barry Plows)

"If only he'd chanced his arm with his left leg."
TREVOR BROOKING
(Paul Mountford)

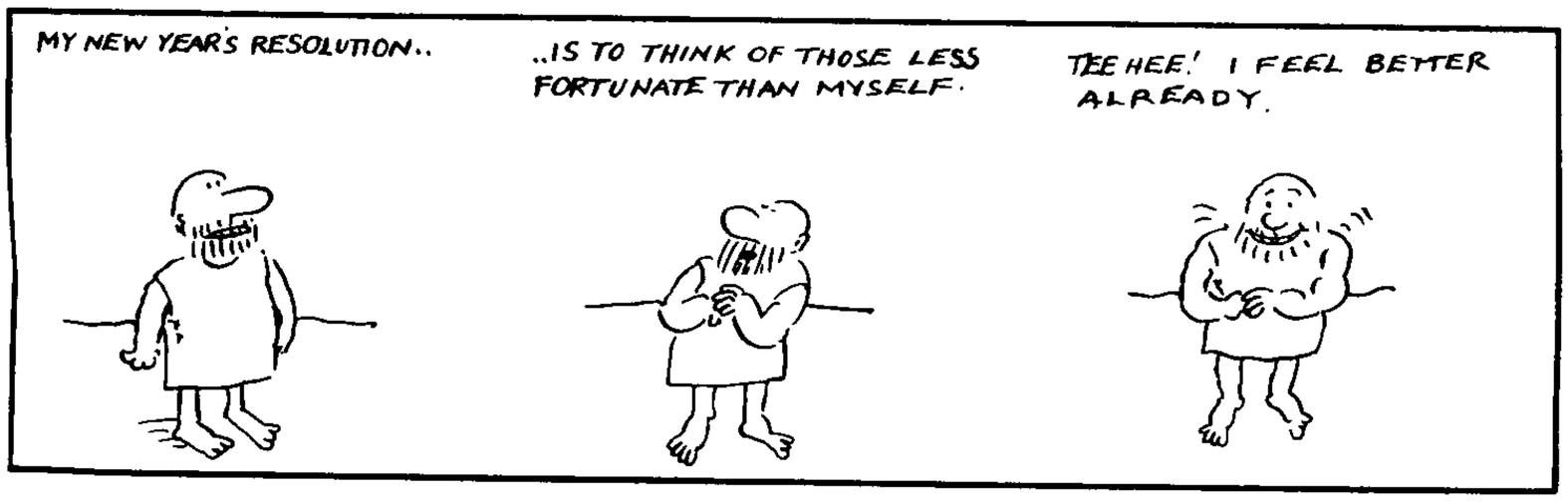
"This huge row of atomic proportions..."
DAVID FROST, ITV
(Peter Embrey)

"The half-time whistles are pealing all over the country."
ELTON WELSBY, Granada
(Dave Riley)

Contestant: *And I won a holiday in Turkey.*
Paul Coya: *Where did you go?*
Contestant: *Turkey.*
BBC2
(R.J. Harris)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from
Lilongwe

from Our Own Correspondent

THE father of our nation, life president Dr Hastings Banda, will soon be no more. He was recently operated on for excess fluid on the brain — not excess brain in the fluid — and at 94, double the average life expectancy of his countrymen, he is completely gaga.

Meanwhile Malawi is in flames, with government buildings, the life president's dotage palaces, and party headquarters burning with the hot flames of the peoples' wrath — the kind of damnation favoured by the old presbyterian zealot as the true fate of the sinner.

The party's young pioneer wing, armed and extremely dangerous, consists of thugs young enough to be his great, great, great grandchildren — but even they could teach even him a thing or two about cruelty. They are hunted down; denounced and beaten in the streets. But neither they nor the regime are finished yet.

Not that the lunatic has really been running the asylum for the last 10 of his 30-year dictatorship. Banda — an elder of the Church of Scotland — has long been levered into his black pin striped suit and bowler hat, fly whisk stuck into his senile grasp by his "official hostess" Mama Cecilia Kadzamira.

Big Mama has been his unofficial concubine since the earliest days as his medical secretary, providing various shorthand and longhand (*geddit?*) services. Mama runs the country with her uncle, John Tembo — "minister responsible for the state of the president's office and the country". The dreadful duo wheel the old dodderer out to face the still cameras whenever necessary. (Not the microphones: Banda's too far gone to be allowed to speak). Mama picked him up bodily and swept him from the room recently when he asked two English visitors to remember him to "Prime Minister Wilson".

Mama and Uncle John know that when he goes they will face the people's wrath. So they won't admit he's dead until the smell from the palace is too much even for them to bear. And they are used to bad smells: whether the stench of corruption — Uncle John is chairman of both the national banks, the national airline, most of the major businesses and owns countless acres of the national territory — or the more rancid smell of sudden and mysterious death.

The midnight knock from the goons of the ruling Malawi Congress Party is commonplace. Ten years ago, three cabinet ministers and the party's general secretary were murdered in a "car crash". Most feel that if anyone knows the identity of the drivers of the on-coming vehicle it is Uncle John Tembo.

Like the iceberg, seven eighths of the victims of this tyranny were out of sight and thus out of mind of the western hypocrites who, so long as Banda kept Malawi a red (and ANC) free zone, opposed adjacent socialists Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere, and let our country as the base camp of the RENAMO mercenaries operating against communist Mozambique, simply held their noses. Now KK and Nyerere are gone, communism defeated in Mozambique and the cold war over, the west has no need for the dictators in Malawi or Kenya for that matter and they're being thrown to the democratic wolves.

Just this year your country suspended the £40 million aid which keeps the grim protestants in power — and has now reinstated it after a period of weeks because they say evidence of "change" has become "tangible" and "irreversible". The "change" came from last June's foreign imposed referendum on a multi-party system which overwhelmingly rejected the regime and had our leaders packing for their flight to Geneva.

The average income here is £2.50 a week — just over half the miserable average for sub-Saharan Africa. The people are barefoot, hungry and ill clad, and as many as one in four are HIV positive. Yet the austerely garbed president from Edinburgh University vegetates in a splendour unsurpassed even by the standards of African potentates.

His palaces glitter with gold, studded with precious stones and adorned with ivory. In Banda's presidential reception room there stands in the corner a once proud, now stuffed, moth-eaten, toothless lion. As a metaphor for the fly whisking GP turned torturer it is apt. For our former colonial master who created and sustained him, it is more apt still.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "What is all the fuss about?" demanded Lance Cpl Suradej Chumnet from his bed in Huay Kwand mental hospital. "Everyone should dance more often. It cured my headache."

Chumnet, a 25-year-old Bangkok policeman, had been arrested after bringing the city's rush-hour traffic to a complete halt. Officer Iamchaengphan explained what had happened: "Chumnet was on traffic duty at a junction that we police call Hell's Intersection when, for reasons still unclear, he suddenly threw away his baton, turned all the traffic lights to green simultaneously, and

began to dance. Not classical Thai dancing either, more like disco dancing. We have that in Thailand. Drivers were confused. They tried to interpret Chumnet's gestures, but that unfortunately ended in chaos. A lorry went through the window of a gun shop. The owner was furious and started shooting at random, but still Chumnet danced on. The latest toll is eleven dead and forty-seven injured, and the intersection was blocked with wrecked cars for more than eight hours."

Justifying his behaviour, Chumnet told reporters: "Motorists are filth from the pond. They are always hurling abuse at traffic policemen, but yesterday they scolded me once too often. I hope they've learned their lesson now, and will be more polite in future." *(The Nation, 14/10/93. Spotter — George Kershaw)*

— ● —

● The audience of Kenya TV's *You Might Meet Your Wife* gasped as the host Nguo Matsi introduced "Gaidi, the two headed man".

Speaking with difficulty, Saidi Mwinyi Gaidi, 23, from Mwavugu village, Kwale district, described how he had begun growing a second head in 1991. "It started with a skin itch on the right top edge of my mouth, which soon developed into a boil. At first I thought it was acne, but it kept on swelling. I tried to lance it, but it still kept growing, and ever since I have been fighting a losing battle."

The giant, non-malignant tumour has now grown larger than Gaidi's own head, blocking his right eye, twisting his mouth, and forcing his tongue out permanently between his teeth. "I have tried everything — from lying face-down in a termite hill to smashing it between two bricks — but all medical help has so far proved futile. Still, on the plus side, it's not life threatening and my father has reserved fifty head of cattle as a wedding gift. I would make a good husband. I am anti female circumcision and kind to animals. And I am a gentleman. If I win the trip to Cape Town with Miss Katoa, I intend to wear a sack over my second head." *(The Standard [Kenya], 4/10/93. Spotter — Jeremy Youngman)*

— ● —

● *"I am quite fine and not feeling any discomfort, thank you," Michael Balama told concerned villagers, "but regretfully, I feel unable to come down just at the moment."*

Balama, a 45-year-old farmer from Pankshin, Nigeria, had been located atop an olive tree two kilometres from his home. According to Odundu Odwilly, his former employer: "This tree nonsense has gone on too long. Five years ago Balama climbed up a locust-bean tree in front of his house, and refused to come down. Villagers, priests and traditional healers all pleaded with him, year after year, but without any success. Two weeks ago, we finally persuaded him to descend, but now he's gone up an even taller one."

Balama was eventually found after the entire village launched a manhunt for him. "I do not know what I am doing up this tree," he told village elders. "I would dearly love to come down, but some people are holding me, and preventing me from doing so." After being told that he was clearly the only person in the tree, Balama enforced a vomit over the head of Mr Odwilly and hurled olives at elders and the women, forcing them to make a tactical retreat. (The Star Tonight, 24/2/92. Spotter — Anthony Fenwick)

Compiled by
Victor Lewis-Smith

CLOSING DEC. 31

OLIVER

A NEW MUSICAL

Featuring the hit songs

I'd Drink Anything

Consider Yourself Well Pissed

Booze, Glorious Booze

Where Is The Bar, Love?

Gotta Drink A Bottle Or Two

and many more

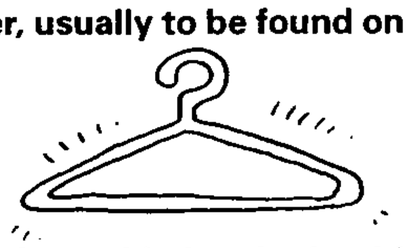
"BEST COMEDY OF '93"

An Important Message to all readers of Private Eye who may have purchased the luminous coathanger advertised in the Gnomemart section of Issue 835.

Gnomemart is recalling the Lum-o-Hang after the discovery that a batch of the hangers contained a dangerous level of plutonium from the Thorp Reprocessing Plant. Exposure to these hangers may cause instant death. Each coathanger is stamped with its own reference number, usually to be found on the hook section of the device.

The batch numbers are:

EBW 7375228/322F
EBW 7375228/858G

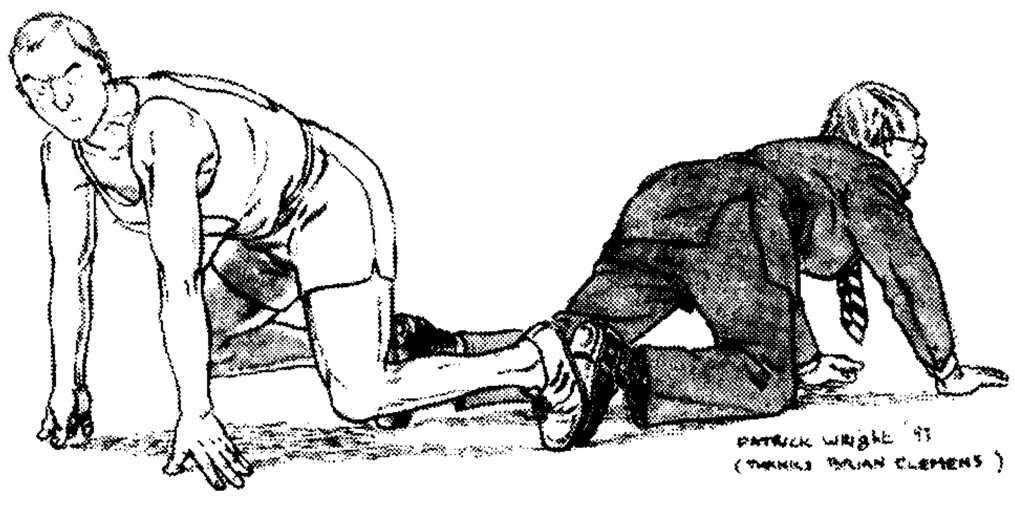


Anyone who purchased a hanger from this batch should immediately dump it in the sea or bury it in concrete at a depth of 3,000 feet. Whatever you do, don't send it back to us.

Issued by Gnomemart

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (29)

STARTING BLOCKS



Great Bores Of Today.

"... age doesn't come into it I think it's everyone's right to have a child whenever they want if the technology's there let's use it women will go to any lengths to fulfil a natural instinct and to deny it must be wrong age doesn't come into it if it was a man like say Clint Eastwood then everyone says 'good luck to him' wasn't the Josey Wales film brilliant? definitely one of his best as I was saying so what if she's 59? if you work it out by the time those twins go to school she'll be how old? eighty or something certainly too old to play a proper role as a full-time mother no it's got to be wrong hasn't it? having children isn't some natural right doctors playing god there should be a law against it did you watch Pale Rider not quite so good I thought..."

Charles's New Year Newsletter No. 1

Dear _____

Thank you for all your Christmas greetings. I am sorry I cannot reply personally to all your kind messages and I hope you will forgive the formal nature of this typed letter.

Well! It has been quite a year and I won't pretend I haven't had my share of problems, but I'm looking forward to 1994, especially now that Diana, my ex, has decided to stay out of the limelight and to give me "some much needed space"!

The months ahead will be a busy time for me as I co-ordinate all my various interests and projects. I will be concentrating especially on the following:

* Inner City Deprivation — something must be done.
* Modern Architecture — It really is appalling, isn't it?
* Shakespeare in Schools — very neglected in my view. Many people cannot even spell his name. Appalling, isn't it?
* Organic Farming — More and more people are coming round to it. The opposite of appalling.
* Camilla Parker Bowles (shome mishtake shurely).

As you can see, all of the above are intimately inter-related. They are all symptoms of what my friend and mentor, Sir Laurens van der Post, described in his book "A Whiter Shade of Pale — Travels Among the Albinos of The Procul Harum". How did he put it? "There's nowt so queer as folk."

I hope you will agree with me that this is very true when you come to think about it.

Happy New Year.

Yours,
CHARLES,
Rex Futurus Quondam

SUPERMODELS Neil Kerber

OKAY INGA, GIVE ME ANGRY..... I WANT YOU TO BE ANGRY...
COME ON, ANGRY, ANGRY, ANGRY....
CHRIST INGA, THIS IS WHY WE PAY EVANGELINA DOUBLE WHAT WE PAY YOU !!
BITCH !!!
PERFECT
CLICK
Kerber

IS 48 TOO OLD FOR A MINISTER TO HAVE A CHILD?

by Our Medical Staff **Lunchtime O'Bstetrician**

SERIOUS ethical questions have been raised by the decision of a 48-year-old Junior Minister to allow himself to impregnate a 34-year-old Conservative Councillor.

Tim Ye-old

The debate centres on whether the Minister, who can be named (Tim Yeo), is old enough to know better or whether it is his natural right as a senior Tory to go around getting his leg over whenever he feels like it.

Supporters of Mr Yeold cite the case of Cecil Parkinson, 59, and one eminent medical spokesman has said:

"Mr Parkinson had a child when he was in his mid-fifties and it did him no harm at all. He was able to return to work after only a few years' paternity leave, regaining a place in the Cabinet and then gaining a life peerage. No one disputes *his* right to be both a father and a spokesman for family values."

Tracy Sharon, 21, 400 metres Freestyle Underwater Ballooning Bronze Medallist at Helsinki. N.I.K.E.

Dame Linda La Plot, 58, author of Prime Slot III. I.T.V.

Mr Richard Littlejohn, 39, L.B.C. (Services to the London Taxi Cab Industry).

Mr Terence Christian, 19, Presenter of The Word. N.B.G. (Services to Comedy).

EYE PHONE IN

You decide on the Minister's Future. Ring one of these free call numbers now (38p per minute).

YEO Should The Minister Resign? **NAYO**

0898 76345 **0898 76284**

Poetry Corner

Lines written on the 80th Anniversary of the First Crossword Puzzle

So. Angry collection
Of letters. (9)

You are
The yig. (anag. 6)

Jeb Birth, a mixed-up poet (1,1,6)

(Continued from page one) **Dr R.J.P. Barkworth**, Chief Environmental Health Officer, Chewton Mendip (services to the Abattoir Industry); **Miss Dawn Raid**, Senior Social Worker, Orkney Islands (services to the Satanic Abuse Industry).

R.S.J.

(Hong Kong)

Mr Ah Slik, Chairman of Triad plc (services to the Conservative Party, approx. £800,000).

K.P.N.U.T.S.

(Civil)

Sir Saddam Hussein, OBE (services to the British Armaments Industry); **Sir Kevin McFilth**, Editor of the Sun Newspaper (services to the Conservative Party and Deborah, his secretary); **Dame Melanie Phillips**, Observer Columnist (services to sales of the Sunday Telegraph).

O.H.M.S.

R.L.H., Boxwallah, Chairman South Thamesdown NHS Trust plc (services to the closure of hospitals); **Mr Roger Levitt**, Fraudster (services to the community: approx. 180 hours); **Mrs Vera Meals-Wheels**, N.S.P.C.G.B.D.O.L. (services to charity); **Mr Julian Sandy,** Patron of F.I.S.T. (Aids Awareness Programme); **Mr P.B.L. Figgis**, "Heraclitus", compiler of the Daily Telegraph Saturday Prize Crossword. *(That's enough Classless Honours — Ed.)*

Celeb

LIGGER

LOOK DAD, AREN'T WE GOOD? WE'VE CLEARED THE DRIVE OF ALL THE SNOW...
WELL DONE, KIDS.
AND WE'RE BUILDING A REALLY REALISTIC SNOW-ROCKSTAR WITH IT.
CAN WE HAVE SOME MONEY FOR MAKING IT PLEASE?
SURE. HERE'S A TENNER.
THERE WE ARE. FINISHED.

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

Today was our last day in the House of Commons before the end of term, and the Labour Party tried to catch me out one last time. Mr Smith had done some sums which showed that Mr Clarke's budget was the same as a 7p rise on the income tax. What did I have to say to that? he asked me very rudely in his Scottish voice. I soon sent him packing with a brilliant answer. I jumped up with my ring-binder, which I often think is my equivalent of Churchill's cigar or Mrs Thatcher's handbag, and quick as a flash I replied: "Well, everyone knows that the Labour Party would put up taxes by more than 7p, if they were the government, which they are not — and NO WONDER!"

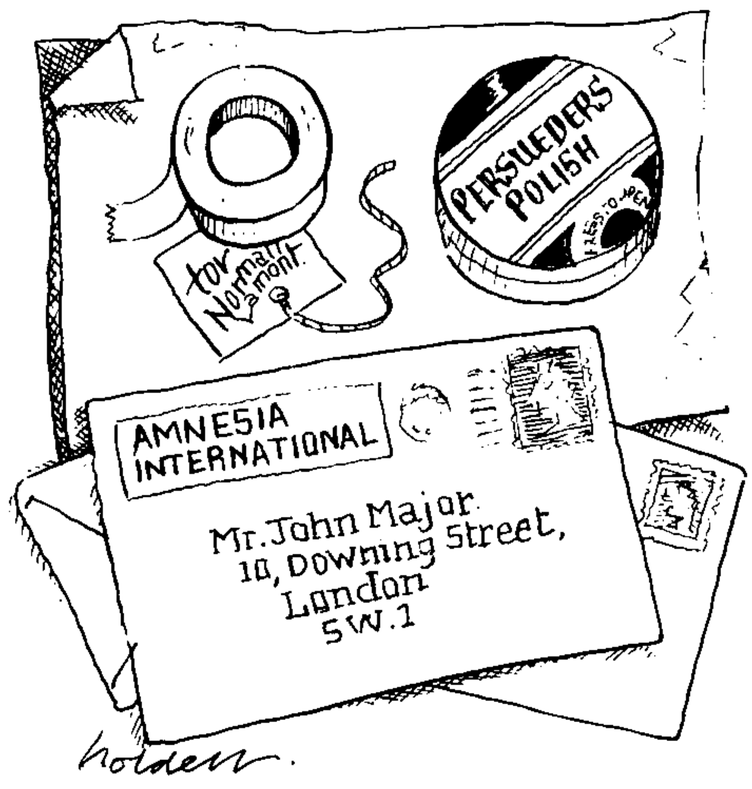
Everybody laughed and cheered, except the Labour Party and some of our side, who obviously hadn't heard. Unfortunately, Mr Clarke rather spoiled the effect when Mr Smith asked him the same question. "You're quite right," he said, "7p is about right. So what?" This shows once again that Mr Clarke is not suitable to be prime minister. Also his shoes are never polished, which shows an untidy mind.

Talking of which, my ex-friend Norman Lamont also tried to catch me out by asking me why I had changed my mind about Northern Ireland and was trying to sell out the Protestants. Again I was too quick for him. I pointed that I hadn't changed my mind, Mr Hurd had changed it for me. This repartee is very easy really when you know how. It is very sad to see Norman becoming so bitter. Why can't he learn to forgive and forget, like I have done with a certain woman whose book I do not want to be given for Christmas!

Tuesday

One of the nice things about being prime minister is that you get hundreds of Christmas cards from very important people all over the world. For instance, in this morning's post I got cards from the following: the Belgian President of the EC, whose name I could not read properly; the Managing Director of Ryman's, thanking me for my custom and including a price list for 1994; Mr Portillo, who has chosen a picture of himself dressed as a toreador with a sword; Mr Clarke, whose card showed himself photographed outside Number 10 — obviously he had not noticed that it was the wrong door; my brother Terry, whose card shows the Empire State Building and plays "Santa's Coming To Town" when you open it up; and finally one from a Mr Onanugu of Thresher's, asking me to forward it on to Mr Lamont, along with a bill for £19.98p.

One thing that did in no small measure almost spoil my day was the card from Mr Lamont himself. This showed the front door of Rothschild's Bank in the City, and inside was a cutting from the Telegraph with a poll which showed that my rating was now even lower than last time. He had written on it: "You are now the most unpopular prime minister since yourself." I shall not be putting this one up, oh no.



Wednesday

Peace on earth, goodwill to men. This year for once it seems the message from the carols is true. And I have played a not inconsiderable role in it. Let there be no doubt about that, thanks to my peace initiative on Ireland. Everyone has been very impressed by my joint-declaration with my new friend, Albert Reynolds, which said that we both wanted peace as soon as possible.

And we are definitely making progress, oh yes. Not so long ago I said I would never talk to the IRA. And now I am. Equally, yesterday I made it clear that there would be no amnesty for terrorists. But today there might be one. So, as you can see, there is plenty of give and take on both sides. Especially mine.

Christmas Day (Chequers)

I got up not inconsiderably early to open my presents. Unfortunately, there seemed to have been a misunderstanding. I had let there be no doubt in my letter to Santa that I particularly did not wish to be given *that* book by *that* woman.

Yet, under the tree there were no less than 17 copies of "The Downing Street Years" all addressed to me. (And all signed by *her*.)

My wife Norman was very sympathetic and told me that the local Oxfam shop would be happy to take them. But when I got down there the lady said they had hundreds already and they could not sell them even for 50p.

So I had to take them home again.

Boxing Day

I am in no small measure angry with the IRA who, in my judgement, are not helping the peace initiative by letting off bombs all over the place.

Mr Hurd rang me up to wish me a Happy Christmas and to ask if I had read his present yet.

I was very short with him and said: "Forget about Christmas. What about the IRA?"

Mr Hurd was, however, very reassuring. "I have made it clear that we will get tough with them if they do not stop the violence".

"But surely", I said in my quizzical Question Time voice, "we have always been tough on the IRA."

"Quite so", said Mr Hurd "But now we will be *even* tougher."

It is good to have a man as bright as Mr Hurd at one's right hand in times of crisis. Not that this is a crisis. Oh no!

Holiday Boxing Monday

At our regular Cabinet crisis meeting Mr Waldegrave defied Mrs Bottomley's health instructions and brought in some of his wife's mince pies, which were not inconsiderably delicious and I ate an imprudent two of them!

Mr Portillo asked me, looking even more smug than normal, what exactly our "getting tough" policy entailed.

"Surely it is clear", I explained, putting him in his place. "We get tough by talking to the terrorists and listening to their demands with an open mind."

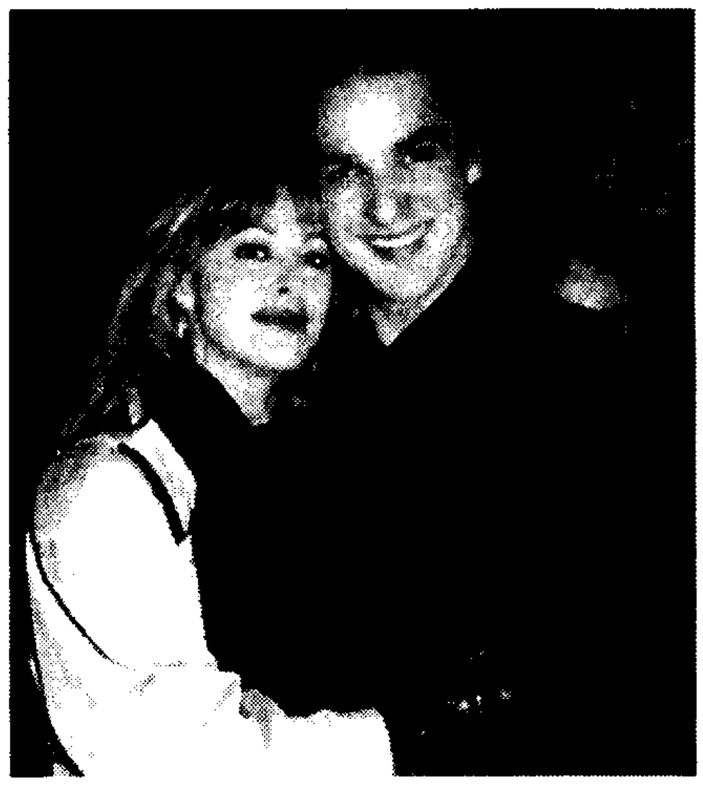
At this point, Mr Clarke woke up and asked Mr Waldegrave if there were any Alka-Seltzers in his emergency First Aid box.

Yes! It's New Year

UPFRONTERS

Continuing the hugely popular Sunday Supplement feature you can read exclusively in every paper...

Absolutely Fabulous! That's what Joanna's looking as she shows **Esther Rantzen** who's in control! Lumlee! Talk about British Gas! Still, Esther's got a Heart of Gold, which matches Joanna's hair! That's Life!



A Sticky Moment for Julian as weather girl **Sally Faber** checks out his warm front! It's glove at first sight for Sally, she's making that crystal Clary! Give him a hand, everyone!!

Here's a Cracker! And Big Man **Robbie Coltrane** is holding one too!! And who is he holding? The Prime Suspect must be Miss Mirren!! Keep your hands off the Dishes, Robbie, or all Helen will break loose!!

Oh, **Jackie O**! Don't be aFreud! It's only Sir Clement trying to share a joke with you! She's certainly a Pedigree Chum! Woof! Woof!

Is he just an Observer? With the Rigg that Diana's wearing, no wonder former editor **Donald Trelford** is trying to keep abreast of current affairs! They're both in the Medea, after all!

Hey Buster! It's **Phil Collins**?! Is he running off with a Ruby?! Or just Waxing lyrical about her? I wonder if this is the Genesis of another chat show!?

Gloria in Excelsis! Ms Hunniford may be wearing a flower, but there's no doubting who is the Darling Bud May.

GUESTS FUME AT £8 ENTRY FEE FOR BORE AWARDS

by Our Equal Opportunity Bore Team **Minette Borin**, **Julie Borchill**, **Lynne Borber**, **Victoria Boren**, **Baudia Fitzherbore**, **Libby Borves**, **Daisy Baugh**, **Anne Borinson**, **Lynda Lee-Borer**, **Barbara Amiel** and **Melanie Phillips**

THERE were ugly scenes at the gates of Buckingham Palace last night, as guests invited to the prestigious Gnome Bore of the Year awards were told by Group 4 security guards that they would have to queue for four hours down the Mall, and then pay an £8 entry fee. Many were unimpressed when they heard that the ticket price entitled them not only to attend the ceremony but also to view a special exhibition of water colours by the Heir to the Throne, including the famous "Donkey By Moonlight" and several studies of the Isle of Loon under thick fog.

Many guests were in a state of exhaustion after their arduous journeys to London on **Mr Richard Branson**'s experimental privatised "Gatwick-to-Buck-House" express, the Virgin Princess. The day-long "travel experience", by way of Inverness, EuroDisney and Thorpe Park, had been unavoidably delayed by a series of "leaves-on-the-line incidents", for which various trees had claimed responsibility.

Mo Mowlam

WHEN the disgruntled guests finally took their seats in the PowerGen Throne Room (formerly Fosters Throne Room), **Mr Emanuel Strobes** introduced the evening's master of ceremonies.

"We are very fortunate tonight," he said, "to welcome the personality who has been called the Renaissance Man of the Media. Whether commenting on football or CDs, CDs or football, his views are always predictable and tremendously dull. Ladies and gentlemen, will you please give a very cool welcome to the former Minister For Fun, **Mr David Mellor**."

A grinning figure then smarmed his way into the limelight, to be met by a rapturous silence, punctuated only by loud boos.

"There's no business like toe business," joked the former Arts Minister as he took the microphone and prepared to read out the nominations for the coveted "Grand Maastricht Bore of the Year" award.

Vikram Seth

MR MELLOR remarked that "it has been a particularly strong year for bores" and joked that he was only sad that, since he was presenting the award, he was obviously not eligible himself.

The crowd roared with laughter at this delicate *bon mot*, which had previously been printed in the *Guardian*, the *Evening Standard*, *Radio Times*, *CDs and Seedymen*, and all other journals.

"Nominations were received for the following," he went on. "The Uruguay round of the GATT talks, for the seventh year running; the motion picture *Jurassic Park* and associated dinosaur spin-offs; and the much-acclaimed memoirs of Baroness Thatcher.

"But," he said, "the judges were in the end unanimous in their decision that this year's unchallenged Bore of the Year should be the **Princess of Wales**."

As the now-redundant band of the 7th and 14th Highland Jobseekers Regiment struck up with a selection from *Sunset Boulevard*, the svelte figure of the world's most beautiful and caring woman strolled onto the platform wearing an Yves St Pollard leotard, and explained that she could not, alas, be present because she had given up all public engagements.

David Dimbleby's Question Time

AT THIS point a diminutive, white-faced figure danced onto the stage, clutching his groin. **Mr Michael Jackson** (for it was he) explained that he would have loved to give Diana an award, but unfortunately he was in hiding and therefore could not be present either.

The world's two best-known recluses then went off hand in hand to await their next engagements, while the audience was served finger-food by the shy, retiring **Miss Claire Latimer**, the alleged non-mistress of the alleged non-prime minister *(who he? Ed)*.

Environmental health officers then swooped on the assorted cheese dips and declared Buckingham Palace to be in contravention of EC health and safety directive 93/416, which requires all premises serving food to be fitted with organo-phosphorous sheep dips.

Lord Palumbo

MR MELLOR then joked that it was time to "dip" into the next award — that given for the year's "Most Boring Newcomer".

Judges, he said, had been unable to agree on an outright winner, and had therefore decided to share the award between TV's **Mr Blobby** and the Scott Inquiry's **Ms Presily Baxendale**.

The two winners were allowed to grill Mr Waldegrave for several hours about the change in the guidelines on the selling of non-military guns to Iraq, until he broke down in tears.

The audience was then entertained with a five-hour video showing highlights of the Times World Chess Championship, with a move-by-move commentary from TV's **Dominic Lawson**, with interminable personal anecdotes contributed by **Mr Donald "Pixie" Trelford**, formerly editor of the *Wednesday Lonrho*.

Koo Stark's New Husband

AS GUESTS yawned, Mr Mellor said he would just "check, mate" on the time, before announcing the winners of the "Richard and Judy Award" for this year's Most Boring Double Act.

"Again," he said, "there has

1993 BORE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

been an extraordinarily high level of boredom associated with this category."

Among the candidates were:

- **Portillo and Lilley**
- **Newman and Baddiel**
- **Nicole and Papa**
- **Rowland and Fayed**

Mr Mellor then asked "the new Gold Blend couple" to "open the envelope" and name the winners.

The lucky couple, **Mr Tiny Rowland** and **Mr Mohammed al-Fayed**, then staged a re-enactment of their historic "reconciliation" in the Harrod's Food Hall. The audience were moved to tears of laughter as the two disgusting old businessmen embraced passionately beneath a plastic model of a shark captioned "Asil Nadir".

Mr Michael Mates then made an unscheduled interruption to the proceedings, and explained that his dear friend and paymaster, Mr Nadir, was innocent on all charges, as he handed out hundreds of free watches inscribed DON'T LET THE TRUTH GET OUT.

Mrs Betty Boothroyd tried to restrain him, but all in vain, as the gallant colonel continued to insist on the Turkish fraudster's innocence for several hours.

He was finally silenced only by the arrival of **Mrs Barbara Mills** and officers of the Serious Fraud Office wearing comic masks and warning guests: "You'll get off scot free if we catch up with you."

Crimewatch UK

THE audience was then rudely awakened by a series of tributes to mark the 80th birthday of Lord Goodman, delivered by **Lord Jenkins OM**, **Sir Edward Heath** and the late **Lady Falkender**.

These were interrupted by the master of ceremonies, who jokingly remarked in an impromptu display of wit: "While we are on the subject of a Goodman, or, rather, good men, or even, perhaps, good women, we must now move on to the Eurotunnel Team Bore Award.

"The short list, I am afraid, is rather long, ha ha ha, and consists of:

- **the John Major Cabinet**
- **the John Smith Shadow Cabinet**
- **Mr Graham Taylor's football team**
- **the cast of *Eldorado* (deceased)**
- **the Arts Council Orchestra Panel**
- **the 200,000 new senior managers of the BBC**
- **the 400,000 new senior managers of the NHS**
- **the "TV Weathergirls"**
- **the "Supermodels"**

"I am sure we would all agree," droned Mr Mellor, "that all of these nominees have been stupendously boring in their own different ways. And the judges were keen to stress that it is very difficult to compare the qualities of tedium displayed by, say, some anorexic bimbo with those of an executive in charge of John Birt's Producer Choice."

As the tension failed to mount, most of the audience went into a nearby room to watch a special edition of *The Late Show*, presented by **Miss Sara Dunant** and **Mr Mark Beardie**. This included a tribute to the genius of the late **Anthony Burgess**, by himself; a eulogy of the novelist **Will Self**, by himself; and a real dull band, live in the studio, whose name no one could remember.

"And it gives me great pleasure," Mr Mellor continued, "to invite my very dear old colleague, **Mrs Virginia Lobotomy**, to step up to receive this award on behalf of the now-500,000 senior managers of the NHS."

Wearing a Marks & Spencer twinset and tartan skirt, the popular Health Secretary paused only for a quick photo-opportunity with 100 of her relatives before announcing that, after very careful thought, she had decided to close down the awards ceremony, as it no longer met the new Market-Testing and Fundholder Efficiency criteria.

Mrs Lobotomy was then showered with eggs by a number of lunatics who had been prematurely released into the audience under the Government's successful Care in the Community scheme. Mrs Lobotomy was then rushed to the nearest Casualty Department that was still open (St Magnus's, John O'Groats).

Graham Gooch

MR DAVID Mellor then attempted another joke by picking up an egg and remarking: "Luckily Virginia is very hard-boiled." At this point, the audience (Sid & Doris Saatchi) decided that Mr Mellor was so boring that he should be instantly replaced as compere by **Lord Frost of Weston-super-Toseeyou**.

The world's most famous breakfast show presenter then put on his serious voice and announced a special new award for 1993 — the Gnomebel Peace Prize for the year's least promising peace initiative.

Dr Henry Kissinger then came onto the platform to praise the tremendous contribution to peace made by:

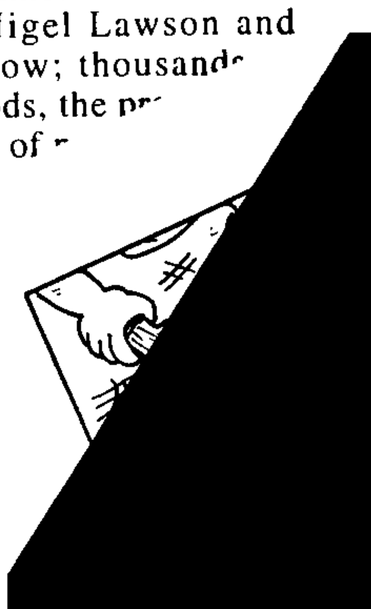
- **the Vance-Owen peace plan for Bosnia**
- **the Major-Reynolds initiative for peace in Ulster**
- **the Clinton-Boutros Ghali peace plan for Somalia**
- **the Rabin-Arafat plan for peace in a very small part of Israel**
- **the de Klerk-Mandela plan for smashing up Buthelezi** *(shurely 'bringing lasting peace and democracy to South Africa'? Ed)*
- **the Buthelezi-Terreblanche plan for smashing up the ANC and the National Party** *(shurely 'bid for a federal constitution'? Ed).*

In his much-loved gravel voice, the former destroyer of Cambodia then called forward **Mr Gerald Adams** to receive the prize on behalf of the IRA.

The Garrick Club

AN ACTOR stepped forward to impersonate Mr Adams accepting the award, and gave a moving speech on how much the IRA wanted peace. The Palace was then rocked by a series of massive car-bomb explosions.

As the ceiling of the Throne Room was blown apart, the remaining guests were showered with the following items: *viz.* dozens of videos of Michael Winner's new film, *Dirty Old Man*; scores of LibDem racist leaflets from Tower Hamlets; several tons of rice and a concrete house left over from the Turner Prize; even more tons of 12-year-old EEC beef, as personally eaten by Food Minister Nicholas Soames; hundreds of remaindered copies of memoirs by Kenneth Baker, Norman Fowler, Nigel Lawson and TV's Ken Barlow; thousands of spent nuclear rods, the property of BNFL; millions of [illegible] sections, entitled [illegible] and Style [illegible] billion [illegible] vatised [illegible] of a priv[illegible] the Heir [illegible] one old en[illegible]



The PETER McLIE Column

DID you see that film on the TV over Christmas? Wasn't it terrible? You'd think they'd find something better to put on over the holiday. I watched that other one, hoping it might be an improvement. But it was even worse. Who watches this stuff, I'd like to know. Not me, that's for sure.

THE QUEEN must be worrying surely about her youngest son Prince Edward. The years go by and not once is his name linked to a bonny lassie. Meanwhile his brothers and sisters are happily married and have settled down with their bonny bairns dandling on their knees.

But Edward remains a solitary bachelor. Is there no one in the glamorous world of TV that could take him in hand? No. Obviously not.

THE recession shows no sign of abating. I have an idea to set the tills ringing and happy shoppers spending their spare bawbies.

Why don't the shops start *discounting* their goods after Christmas when we all have a few days to wander around and buy things. They could call it "The January Sale". How about that then for a suggestion that's Grandy and Dandy!

EVERY year it's the same, isn't it? We can't adjust to the fact that another year of our short span has been and gone. I should have got used to it by now, but I find I am still writing 1992 on my cheques, when of course it is now 1993.

"Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot", as the old song has it. So let's not forget my friend A.N. Wilson, who Santa has given a lovely tie. *(This is brilliant! Have another year's contract. B. Pad.)*

Ronnie Kray to divorce

GANGLAND killer Ronnie Kray is to divorce his wife Kate Howard, who lives in Kent. Kray, jailed for life in 1969 with twin brother Reggie and currently in Broadmoor, has instructed solicitors to petition on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour.

Daily Mail

GRADE A
SAINSBURY'S
FRESH
BRITISH CHICKEN
FREE RANGE
Chicken reared with freedom to roam outdoors
WITHOUT GIBLETS

Special January discount: 1p!

K-JEL presents

JULIAN CLARY'S

ALL-TIME FAMILY HITS!!

Includes

FISTING THE NIGHT AWAY

WHITE FISTMAS

FISTY

FIST AND SHOUT

HEY FISTER TAMBOURINE MAN

I SAW DADDY FISTING SANTA CLAUS

I LEFT MY FIST IN SAN FRANCISCO

and many more!

LIZ

BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ

A MOTTO
IT SEZ 'SINGLE MOTHERS DESTROY FAMILY VALUES'..
AYE WELL WE'VE LOST LUURDS A VALUE TA SNIFFA AN' ONE'S FAT SLAG!
AH'M DOON TA WOR LAST FOUR BILLION, ME!
AH'M DONATIN' AAL WOR CHARITIES TA CHARITY!
YA CAN NEVVA HOLD NUTHIN' DOON FER FIVE MINUTES!
AT LEAST AH WENT OOT WI' A BANG!
DAILY MEAL
DIANA THROWS IT ALL UP
AH'M STILL GONNA BE QUEEN!
AYE, PET, NOW COME AN' MEET NAPOLEON AN' ELVIS PRESLEY!
HUR! HUR!
MENTAL ASYLUM
ISOLATION WING
ROYALS →
POLITICIANS →
THANKS FER Y'SUPPORT!
1994 : THE YEAR OF CHAZZA!
YORRA TWO-TIMIN' LOW LIFE WHO DIVVENT GI' A SHITE FER NEEONE 'CEPT YERSELF 'N' GERRIN' TH' CROWN AN' THE LOOT!
AN' THEM'S REAL FAMILY VALUES!

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO DAVID (JENKINS)

The Story of the One Stupid Man

1. And behold there lived an unwise man who lived in the land of Dur-ham.
2. And his name was David, from the House of Jenkins.
3. And he was a powerful man in his own land.
4. And lo! There came a great light in the firmament, like unto a star, and it called to him, saying "Follow me".
5. So David journeyed from Durham into the town which is called London.
6. And there he enquired of those that dwelt there, saying: "I have seen a bright light. From whither doth it come?"
7. And an driver of cabs said unto him:
8. Go unto the Bush which is called Shepherds, and there will you find the Bright Light.
9. And it will be coming out of a TV studio.
10. Go therein and speak to another man called David.
11. And, lo, the star appeared unto David, who is called Jenkins, and saith unto him: "I am the star. And my name is also David. That is to say Sir David, that is known even as Frostie."
12. And all about a great host of lights suddenly appeared, and a voice was heard saying: "Quiet studio, ten seconds to go."
13. And, lo, the Bishop spake unto the multitudes, saying: "Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy. For everything that is written in the Bible is a load of cobblers."
14. And Frostie rejoiced in his heart. For he knoweth that the following day the newspapers would again be proclaiming his name throughout the land.
15. And the bishop thought likewise.
16. Then Frostie gave unto him gifts of gold, more gold and thirty pieces of silver for his first-class travelling expenses.
17. And Frostie dismisseth him, saying: "Great show, Bish. Super to see you. Come back and do it again at Easter."

PRINCE CHARMING'S SHOCK LETTER

Ardent
PRODUCTIONS LIMITED

25 December 1993

OPEN LETTER TO EDITORS

I am taking this unusual step of writing to you directly to say that I am dreadfully upset at the attention the media have been giving to my friendship with Miss Cinderella. For the record, we have met only twice. Firstly, at a ball, which she had to leave early. And subsequently when I returned to her an article of footwear which she had inadvertently left in my palace.

Our friendship is very much at an early stage. I would like to make it clear that we have no plans for marriage at present, and reports that I am planning to give her half my kingdom are, to say the least, premature. Miss Cinderella has her own career as a domestic management executive.

Please do not subject us to the same harassment which has been so deeply distressing and damaging to other members of my family, such as my sisters-in-law Snow White and Sleeping Beauty.

Please will you remember, at this season, the message of pantomime, and leave me alone. I am sure you will. (Chorus of hacks: Oh no we won't.)

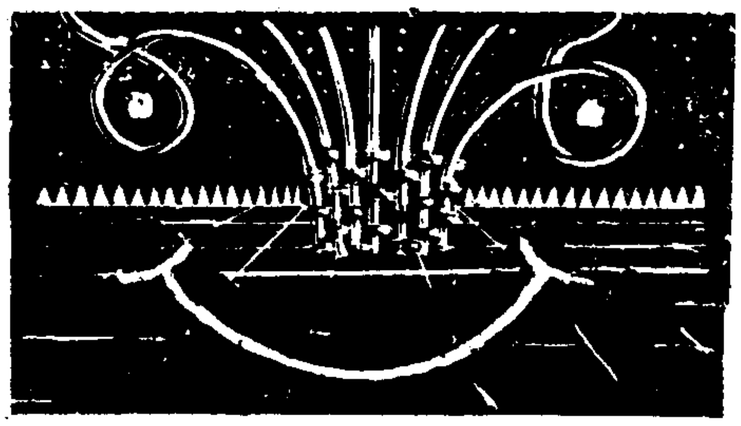
CHARMING WINDSOR

Edward Windsor **Sophie Rhys-Jones**

How they are related

Edward The Really Useful	Jones The Baker
Edward The Not-Quite-So-Useful	Jones The Dairy
Edward The Tea-Boy	Jones The Public Relations Girl
Edward Fox	William Rees-Jones
Mrs Windsor	Griff Rees-Mogg
Windsor Davies	Mickey and Griff
Frank Windsor	Mel and Griff
Barbara Windsor	Melanie Griffiths
Eddie "The Eagle" Windsor	Sophie Grigson
TV's Mr Blobby	**Sophie Grease II**

DIARY



MARGARET THATCHER

We enjoyed an absolutely first-rate Christmas, highly professional, mainly family — Bernard Ingham, the Powells, Jeffrey Archer — but also with Denis and Carol and Mark and Mark's wife and the grandchild.

Needless to say, I was working hard on my Despatch Boxes until late on Christmas Eve, burning the candle at both ends, fine-tuning every last detail of the Community Charge, and preparing an up-to-the-minute report on the crisis in the Gulf for my dear friend President Bush, who is a believer.

As midnight struck, Mark put his head round the door. "Merry Xmas, Mumsie!" he said. Then he must have realised that I was up to my neck in my Despatch Boxes. "Come on, Mumsie, RELAX a bit! After all, it's not as though you're P.M. any more!" he said.

"What DO you mean?" I said. And I always thought he was a believer. He HAD been a believer, once upon a time, but he didn't have the perseverance, the greater insight, the stamina, to carry it through. Underneath my mask of composure my emotions were turbulent. "You too?" I said.

He quickly changed the subject: no guts. "We've all gathered for a drinkie-poos downstairs — spot of the old cham-poo, eh, Mumsie?" he said.

"I must just finish batting for Britain, love" I said, attempting to clam him down, "or these foreigners are going to ride roughshod over us — whatever happens, I must make sure we never sign the Maastricht Treaty, and I must fight for the Community Charge every inch of the way. I'll see you all downstairs in an hour or two."

I then carried on working, late into the night. And as I finished writing each piece of paper, I would hold it over the log fire, as Charles Powell (a believer) had instructed me to do, knowing that it would rise high into the sky, floating onto President Reagan's desk, ready for the morning.

"Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells" my grandchild Malcolm was singing over Christmas breakfast. "Then let's get the bells fixed!" I said, "For goodness sake, let's have no moaning minnies in this household!"

After breakfast, I presided over a special Christmas meeting of the Cabinet, taking special care to make it quick, so that everyone could get back to their wives and second families. "Just one or two topics I wish to discuss," I said, by way of opening. "Now, Cecil — how are the ground forces bearing up in the South Atlantic?"

At this juncture, Carol burst in singing "Happy Christmas to YOU" at the top of her voice. "Golly gosh, Mummy!" she said, "What on earth are you doing in the dining room all on your tod? Wouldn't you prefer to be opening lots of lovely nice prezzies with the rest of us?"

And then she smiled. She SMILED! It was treachery with a smile on its face — perhaps that was the worst thing of all. There was that look on her face: "What have I done?" But it was too late to change anything. And she too had been a believer, once.

"I'm just finishing off some vital business in here, Carol," I said, calmly but firmly, "I'll be with you as soon as hostilities in the Falklands have ceased". Carol closed the door. "Now, Cecil — " I resumed.

I finally broke off the Cabinet at 12.05 and went through to the drawing room, where the presents lay under the Christmas tree. "A very Happy Christmas to you, Martin," we said to our grandson, giving him a rather heavy box, beautifully wrapped by Bernard, "I hope you get a very great deal of pleasure from it."

Our grandson, soon to be five, opened the wrapping with gusto. Yes! It was a copy of my best-selling new book, *The Downing Street Years* — specially signed by his granny — 'To Melvyn from Granny Lady Thatcher'. For some reason, he immediately burst into tears. Talk about prima donnas! Goodness me, he was touchy! I couldn't believe it! Dismayed? Of course I was dismayed! I had remained loyal to him for these five long years — and now this! I have given him a very decent Christmas present — and now this! But I was not going to be BLACKMAILED in this GRUBBY little manner — no! no! no! I'm sorry to say that, after all those years, he thought he had become indispensable — a dangerous illusion for a grandchild. "But Daddy promised me a KALASHNIKOV!" he wailed.

At this point Mark, who has an insatiable appetite for compromise, chipped in. "Quick, Arturo!" he said to one of his nice business acquaintances. "Nip out and get him one from the back of the car!" And so confrontation was averted — but at what a price to our standing as a grandmother.

The table was beautifully laid for our Christmas lunch, though all the knives were pointing at me. "I would just like to say one or two words before we start," I said, sincerely. "Where there is discord, may we bring money. Where there is error, may we bring troops. Where there is doubt, may we bring feet. And where there is despair, may we bring hardship." We then sat down, and I turned to the great man on my right, who had flown all the way from America to be with us on the very special day.

"We still have so much to do, Ronnie," I said. "To reap the full benefit of the great advances we have made — and we are the ones chosen to complete that task."

"Shall I take this empty chair out of your way, Margaret?" chipped in dear old Bernard Ingham, sheepishly.

"Certainly not, Bernard!" I replied, "Can't you see that President Reagan is sitting on it?"

Poor old Bernard. I will shortly have to ask him to make way for someone younger. He is becoming rather less effective than I had hoped, and organisation has never been his forte.

Lunch ended abruptly. First it was Mark. "Turkey, Mumsie?" he said. And now him too! I was shattered. "How DARE you call me a turkey — I am the leader of the free world!" I replied. And then, five minutes later, "Crackers, Mummy?" said Carol. "Are you calling me INSANE?" I said. You could have knocked me down with a feather. This was a mixture of bile and treachery I had never expected from them. But I had to face up to the situation. After consultation with my advisors, I arranged to see each member of the household in my study.

Denis was the first to come in. He looked to one side. "A very Happy Christmas, Margaret," he said. And then Bernard came in. "A Very Happy Christmas, Margaret," he said. I was beginning to notice that a pattern — disloyal and treacherous — was emerging. Charles Powell entered. "A Very Happy Christmas, Margaret." Even Charles! Somehow, I would have expected something more subtle from him! And so it went on. "A Very Happy Christmas, Mumsie," said Mark. Yes! It was true! They had arranged it all behind closed doors, while I was away batting for Britain — and their omission was like a knife turned in my heart. Not a mention from a single one of them of A Happy New Year — and after all I had done for them. TREACHERY! TREACHERY! BLACKMAIL AND TREACHERY!

Stolen balls make Norman wail

The Scotsman

Although protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, a task force set up by the Countryside Commission recently reported that they are suffering enormous root damage from new buildings and underground utilities.

The Times

Literary Review

Better dead than read...

I BLAME Stephen Fry. Though there had been celebrity novels before — does anyone remember Max Bygraves' trail-blazing mafia caper *The Milkman's On His Way*? — it took the success of *The Liar* (60,000 in hardback, 200,000 and rising in paperback) to open the floodgates.

Since then there have been thespians (Simon Williams, Kate O'Mara); politicians (Theresa Gorman, Edwina Currie pending), pop musicians (Bruce Dickinson of Iron Maiden); and assorted rich people of no obvious distinction (Ivana Trump). Newman and Baddiel are said to be writing one (each). Lady Thatcher is almost certainly writing one.

These books have one distinguishing feature, which is that unlike *The Liar*, whose author can hold a pen, they were generally indescribably bad. Set down next to, say, Ivana Trump, Jack Higgins suddenly looks like a master of the pithy phrase, and Will Self is — what? — a genius whose lustre will glow as long as the lamp of literature continues to shine etc. etc.

Or perhaps *two* distinguishing features. For not only are practically all these books inept to the point of ridicule; they are also in the vast majority of cases not written by the people whose names appear on their title pages. Publishers get very coy about this, and there is a lot of euphemistic chatter about "advice" and "collaboration", but it can confidently be stated that when X the celebrity decides to write a novel, X's contribution will usually be limited to a plot outline or at the very best a rough draft.

In some ways this is slightly less disgraceful than it sounds, as many a bestselling "proper" novelist has his or her books rewritten by a harassed editor these days. The phenomenon, too, is age-old. Thackeray satirised it a century and a half ago in *Pendennis*, in the person of the Hon. Percy Popjoy, whose first novel is put together for him by a hack who in turn cribs from an old magazine story (Percy's friends amuse themselves by congratulating him on the merits of non-existent passages).

At least the publishers of the 1840s had the grace to pretend that what they offered was the genuine article. One current development is for publishers to dispense even with the illusion of authenticity. The press release announcing the imminent arrival of a novel by (gasp) Naomi Campbell, helpfully announced that Ms Campbell would be assisted in her lucubrations by one "Carly MacIntyre", the pen-name of Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson's in-house editor Caroline Upcher. This is honest of a sort, but a more truthful formulation might have been "Sorry, Naomi love, we know you couldn't write your way out of a paper bag, but here's a million quid for your name."

Happily, though, the old ways endure. Splashed across the front cover of a recent edition of *The Bookseller* was a Hodder-Headline advert to the effect that Britt Ekland has written a novel, due out in the spring. I mean, *Britt Ekland!*

Writing is hard, darlings, as the hundreds of thousands of aspirant and unpublished scribblers scattered around the country know to their cost, and to publish "books" by "writers" whose only distinction is the frequency of their appearances in *Hello!* is pretty rich, especially as it comes courtesy of a group of people whose complaint about the likelihood of VAT on books was that it would amount to "a tax on literature".

Meanwhile, it should be put on record that the chances of Ms Ekland having had very much to do with *The Sweet Life* are negligible in the extreme (something Hodder-Headline is most welcome to dispute), and that it is time some public-spirited book-buyer considered suing her publishers under the trades descriptions act.

Books & Bookmen

☐ **SOMEWHAT mischievous of the *Bookseller* to publish as its lead letter to the editor on 17 December one from Denis Dugdale of Akme Publications of Brighton regarding trade with Iran.**

Mr Dugdale points out that a recent letter in the *Times* protesting about the attempted murder of Salman Rushdie's Norwegian publisher was signed by, among others, Sir Roger Elliott. As well as being president of the Publishers' Association, Sir Roger was chief executive of OUP in 1989 when the venerable academic publishing house broke the worldwide embargo of the Tehran book fair to the outrage of the publishing world and much of the serious press.

Readers may recall that it was the OUP under Sir Roger which failed to honour an oral commitment to publish Andrew Malcolm's brilliant philosophical treatise, *Making Names*, currently available from W.H. Smith. By coincidence the publisher is Akme of Brighton.

"Dad, what's a book?"

■ BOOKSELLERS across the land have been jamming the Publishers' Association's switchboard, begging chief executive Clive Bradley to do something to stop the American discount store, Costco, slashing the prices of top bestsellers at its warehouse shopping club in Thurrock, Essex.

Costco is discounting more than 200 mainly net titles including *The Downing Street Years*, John le Carre's *The Night Manager* and Delia Smith's *Complete Cookery Course*. Bradley has told booksellers claiming to have lost business to Costco that the Americans, unfamiliar with the net book agreement and English legal language, have asked to be allowed until after Christmas to decide whether they are *bona fide* wholesalers.

No doubt after Christmas Costco will decide that it isn't a *bona fide* wholesaler and gracefully withdraw — by when it will have made a vast profit at the expense of professional booksellers, most books being sold in December.

☐ *ALERTED by the Society of Authors to the aberrant behaviour of vanity publishers and "self-publishing" concerns, the Sunset Times ran a swingeing attack a couple of months ago on the cynicism and dishonesty of such outfits.*

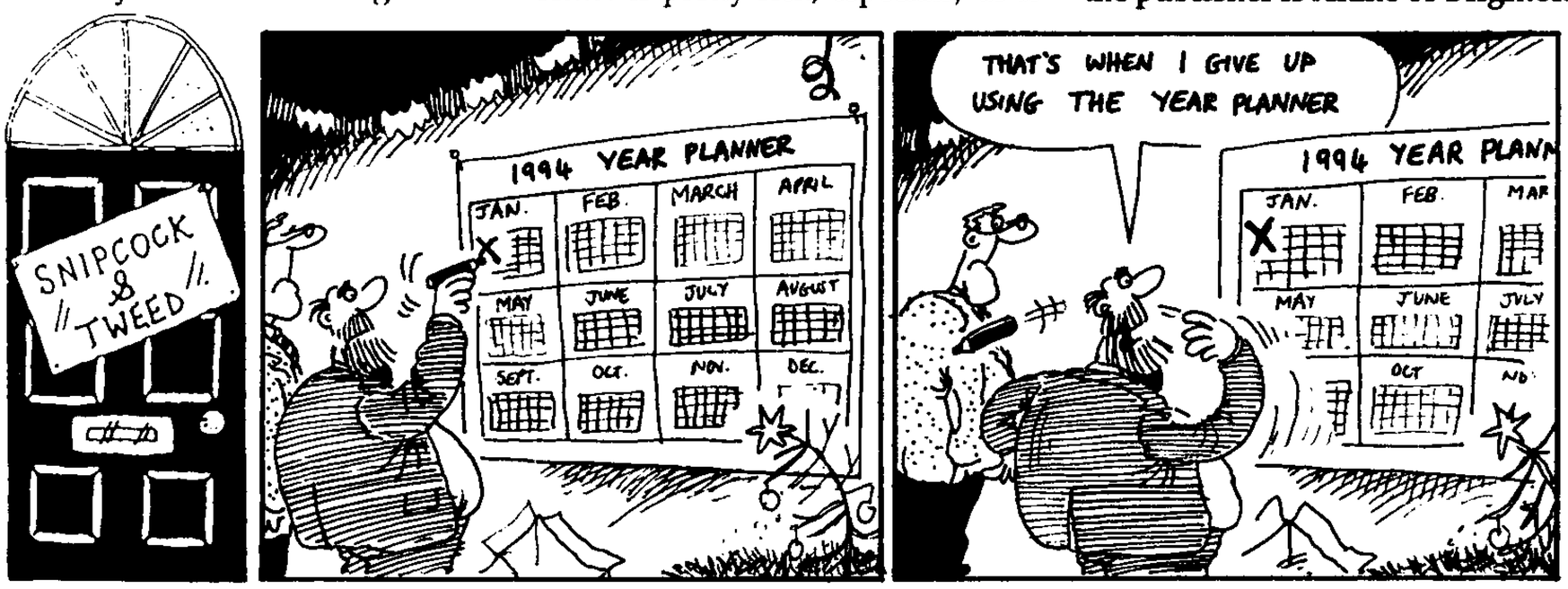
Until then such firms were often almost the only publishers to provide Section 6 (Books) of the Sunset Times with paid advertising, which has now been banned.

The Self-Publishing Association of Worcester was particularly censored for misleading authors. Could this be the same Self-Publishing Association, also of Worcester, singled out for extravagant praise in a gushing article by Miranda Seymour in a previous issue of Section 6?

Ms Seymour, reviewing Frances Thomas's biography of Christina Rossetti, trilled: "It's a long time since I have read a book that was so well-produced and printed and, a rare treat nowadays, so lacking in errors and misprints".

The association recently went into liquidation owing £275,000. A pity, perhaps, that as with other better known publishing houses which have failed, the firm wasn't taken over and its principles made instant millionaires, their imprint becoming part of Random House, Reed or some other conglomerate.

'Bookworm'



footnotes

KEEP OFF THE GRASS

A RATHER crucial fact was not passed on to the jury at Winchester crown court in the recent, heavily-publicised case involving a former escort agency manageress, Donna Cannon. The chief prosecution witness was a celebrated police informer.

Ms Cannon was charged with blackmailing one of the agency's clients, James Lawson. Lawson's story was that he and a friend had had sex with an agency girl who told him he need not pay the agency fee of £30. Donna Cannon, he said, had then threatened to accuse him of rape unless he handed over the money.

Donna Cannon's story was that Lawson had had sex on different occasions with two girls from the agency. The encounters frightened both girls, who complained to the police. Cannon had, she said, wanted to stop Lawson making any further approaches to the agency, and that was why she threatened him with a rape allegation. Hampshire police agreed that the first girl's complaints about Lawson had been taken so seriously that his house was raided by armed officers.

The prosecution case rested almost entirely on Lawson's credibility. He agreed with defence barrister, former Tory MP Ken Hind, that he had several previous convictions including dishonesty, forgery and actual bodily harm. Flamboyantly, however, he accused the defence of trying to blacken his character and repeatedly insisted he had not been in any trouble for twelve years.

The jury found Donna Cannon guilty of blackmail (though she was acquitted of perverting the course of justice).

Lawson admitted in evidence that his real name is Peter McNeil. No one mentioned the last time that Lawson/McNeil was in the witness box — which was at the Old Bailey in 1988. He appeared there as a police informer giving evidence for the prosecution against three Mafia drugs smugglers who were seeking to link up with the IRA.

The ringleader, John O'Boyle, was sent to prison for 18 years; the other two for 10 years. The gang was caught after police were tipped off by one of its members, Peter McNeil. McNeil directed them to a taxi in which another gang member, David Medin, was guarding a suitcase full of cocaine. Medin in turn agreed to give evidence for the prosecution and was let off with six years. McNeil, the original grass, was given immunity from prosecution.

Convicted: Donna Cannon

The case was widely publicised. Stewart Tendler, the *Times* crime reporter, wrote: "Peter McNeil, a Londoner in his 30s, was part of the distribution group and had taken fright. Driving O'Boyle to Chesterfield, McNeil, a car dealer, thought he was being followed and went to the police. According to police, McNeil — held in Columbia in 1985 when he was linked to allegations involving the supply of cocaine worth £70m to Britain — approached the drugs squad seeking a reward." Tendler's report concluded: "McNeil had a larger role in distribution than they had realised" (*Times*, 26 November 1988).

The *Daily Mirror* carried a long "exclusive" interview with McNeil, in which he claimed, over brandy and oysters paid for by the *Mirror*, that his name should not have been disclosed at the trial, and that he was a wanted man, hunted by the Mafia. "He believes," the report went on, "that he deserves a reward from public funds and should be provided with a new identity by the police" (*Mirror*, 26 November 1988).

There is no record of a reward, but McNeil did get a new identity, James Lawson, chief prosecution witness in the blackmail case against Donna Cannon.

Would the Winchester jury have thought differently of Lawson's evidence if they had known of his involvement in the 1988 Mafia trial? Would his involvement with the police as an informer and his drug-running past have painted him in rather different colours to those he appeared in at the trial? Donna Cannon's lawyers certainly think so.

So why did the defence not know about Lawson's informer role? Why did the crown prosecution service (CPS) not disclose it? A clue to the answer may be an "ex parte" application made by the CPS to the judge before the trial asking (and getting) permission not to disclose certain information.

The case for non-disclosure was based on public interest. Was the non-disclosed information McNeil's role as an informer? If so, it seems the lesson of the Matrix Churchill trial — that the public interest should not be an excuse for not disclosing vital information in a criminal case in which the defendant's liberty is at stake — has not been properly learned.

Donna Cannon appears before the judge for sentence in January.

Daily Mirror, Saturday, November 26, 1988 Part 1

Bullet waits for drugs mobster who turned grass

THE MAFIA ARE GOING TO KILL ME

Cocaine gang is jailed

EXCLUSIVE By FRANK THORNE

Exclusive: The Daily Mirror, *Nov 26 1988*

Foster homes

■ THERE seems no limit to the achievements of Sir Christopher Foster of Coopers & Lybrand.

Not only were his brains behind the poll tax (see last *Eye*), and not only is he the genius behind rail privatisation (see the *Eye* before that), but for six vital years he was also chairman of one of London's biggest housing associations, Circle 33.

Each year Sir Christopher found new superlatives to describe the association's progress. When he retired in 1992 he reflected modestly on "Circle 33's long tradition of offering sensitive and innovative solutions".

He retired as chairman, so the report disclosed, for "health reasons" which were not serious enough to knock him off the board altogether, nor obstruct his role as energetic adviser to the secretary of state for transport.

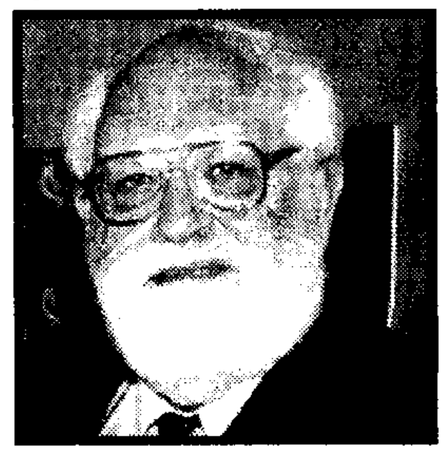
It was only this year that the Circle 33 management was obliged to disclose, sadly, that behind the backs of Sir Christopher and his colleagues a builder and a manager had from 1986 to 1992 systematically swindled the association of many hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Charity Wilts

■ ARTIST and author Sebastian Beazley and his family were chucked out of their much-loved almshouse home in Corsham, Wiltshire, last year even though they never owed a penny in rent nor broke a single clause of their tenancy agreement.

The landlord, a charity called The Dame Margaret Hungerford Trust, insisted it needed the house for a "re-development" denounced by Piloti in the *Eye* in October 1992 as "monstrous". One reason Mr Beazley fought his eviction was the state of his heart, which doctors advised could prove fatal if he were forced out of his home. The charity grimly pursued the eviction, and won at Swindon crown court before Judge Boothman.

Six weeks after the eviction, Sebastian Beazley had a heart attack and died. The *Eye* asked John Lock, accountant-trustee of the Dame Margaret Hungerford Trust (another prominent trustee is the boozy Lord Methuen):



Evicted: The late Sebastian Beazely

Q: Has planning permission been obtained for developing the almshouses?

A: No.

Q: How long would it be before development is likely to start?

A: I really can't say.

Q: Has a new tenant been found for the Beazley's former home?

A: There is someone living in the house, as a caretaker. no rent is paid.

Q: How much was spent on legal fees on the eviction?

A: I've no idea.

Q: What is the trust's response to the charge that the eviction was expensive and unnecessary?

A: We would not have sought the eviction without first contacting the Charity Commissioners, who advised us to go ahead with it.

THE JORDAN CRUNCH

SO HYPNOTISED were the hacks at the Scott inquiry by the quirky personal behaviour of Alan Clark that they missed the central point of his evidence: a point which looks likely to blow Lady Thatcher right out of the water.

The issue was the sale of arms from Britain to Saddam Hussein via "conduit" countries, mainly Jordan.

Lady Thatcher told Scott: "Lethal equipment we do not export to *Iraq." That has* been the case, she said, since 1980. But, she was asked, did any lethal equipment go to Iraq indirectly through Jordan? Thatcher's cabinet office said yes. A note, now known as the Iraqnote, written in July 1990 from Thatcher's cabinet office, admitted: "It appears that Iraq systematically used Jordan as a cover for her procurement activities and, we are certain, with the connivance of senior figures in the Jordanian administration".

Lady Thatcher insisted she hadn't "an inkling" about this until August 1990 — a month after the Iraqnote was written. In that month, she told Scott, she met the king of Jordan and was told in a briefing note before the meeting about the arms traffic from Britain through his country to Iraq. She said she was "surprised" because "we had a good relationship with the king".

Moreover, she revealed, the king himself didn't know about it until she told him! He was, she said "very very taken aback indeed... very distressed". Thus we are expected to believe that while the cabinet office knew perfectly well that Jordan was a cover for Saddam's arms smuggling, Thatcher herself and the king of Jordan had no idea about it.

Alan Clark, who was a mere minister of state in Thatcher's government, told a completely different story. He said he had known all about the Jordan conduit for arms to Saddam long before 1990. His formal statement to the Scott inquiry blurted out the truth in typically reckless fashion:

"It is certainly true that a lot of illicit traffic was going through Jordan... More than half the material purchased by Iraq was actually consigned to Jordan," he said.

Presiley Baxendale, counsel for the inquiry, asked:

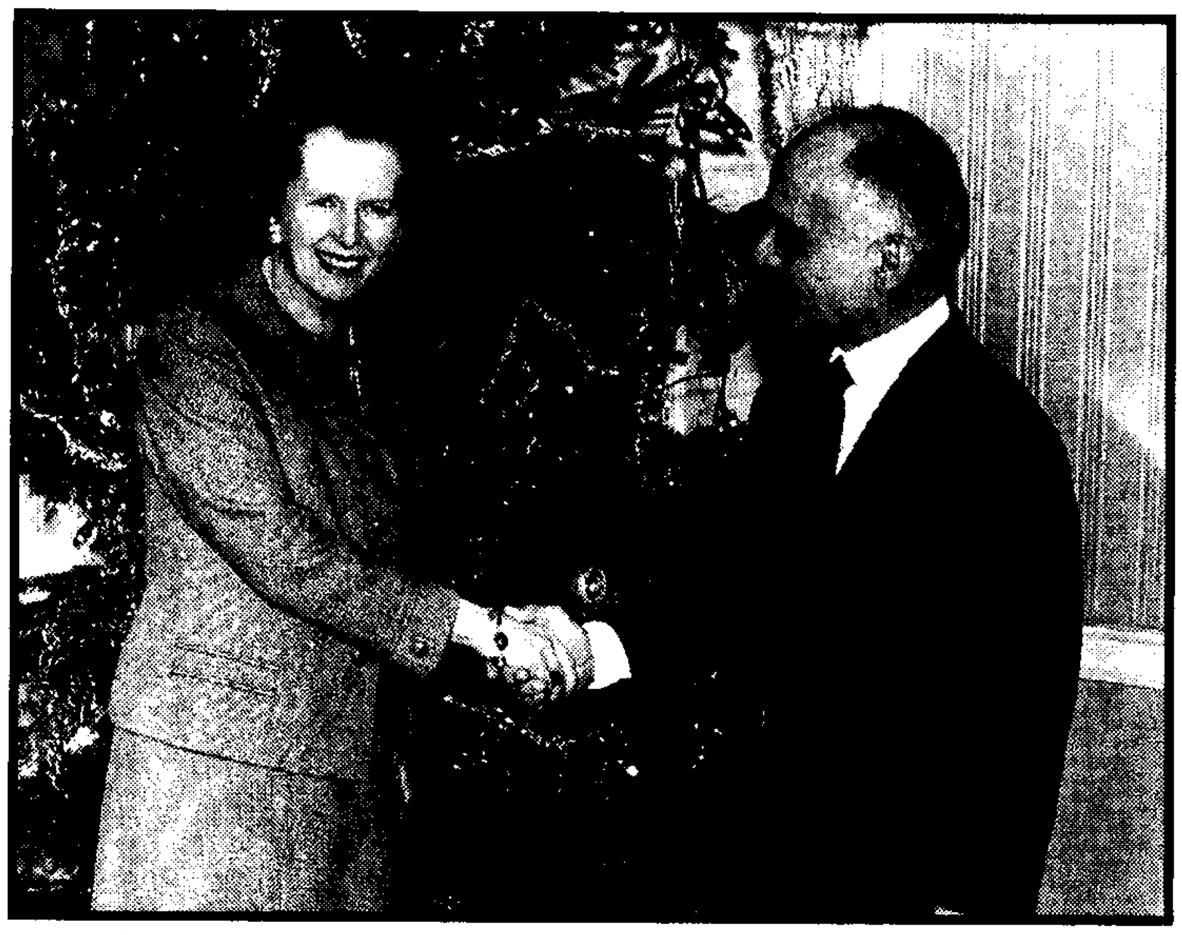
Q: Where did you get that information from?

Clark: It is a kind of slang expression really.

Q: For a lot?

Clark: For a lot, exactly... I think there was a tendency for the trickier items to be consigned to Jordan... It was well-known that Jordan was the great route for breaking sanctions.

Exactly how much "lethal equipment" or, in Clark's delightful phrase, "trickier items", went from Britain to Jordan and thence to Iraq? That's a question ministers are determined not to answer.



THE KING AND I: *Her Royal Highness — and His*

During the embarrassing evidence to Scott of Lt Col Richard Glazebrook in June, it emerged that the value of the arms package signed by Thatcher with the king of Jordan in 1985 was £275 million. It has also emerged that there were two other major arms deals with Jordan, one at the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1981, the other in June 1987. No one has even hazarded a guess at the amount of arms involved in these packages.

Jim Cousins, Labour MP for Newcastle Central, has been trying to prise out more facts. On 3 November he asked Jonathan Aitken, a former arms exporter who is now minister for defence procurement, for details of the arms sold to Jordan. Aitken astonished the Commons by answering the question. Usually, he explained, the government kept such matters secret, but some facts had been blabbed out at the Scott inquiry. So Aitken felt he could disclose 60 types of weaponry which went to Jordan, including:

- 120mm and 105mm ammunition supplied by Royal Ordnance, now British Aerospace.
- Main battle tank spares supplied by Royal Ordnance, Vickers and David Brown.
- 20mm and 30mm ammunition, supplied by BMARC.

(Aitken would certainly have known all about the last contract. He was a director of BMARC at the time).

The amounts and values of the weapons exported were left out of Aitken's answer. Cousins was specially interested in the 120mm shells which are fired from Chieftain tanks. Jordan had a few Chieftains, but Iraq had many more. On 13 December, therefore, he put down another question to Aitken asking for details of 105 and 120mm ammunition shells and tank spares sold to Jordan. Aitken, a former courageous campaigner for freedom of information, clammed up. An answer, he considered, would "not be appropriate".

Three other matters cast some doubt on the Thatcher/King Hussein insistence that they knew nothing about what was going on in their countries while they were in charge of them.

1. The 'Chinese' mortars

As British troops moved through conquered Iraq after the Gulf war they became increasingly irritated by the evidence that some of the weapons ranged against them had been made in Britain. One officer, known to the *Eye*, took a photograph of a box of mortars marked in English. Among the markings were the initials "MOD" and "RO". When the photo was widely published in the press, and when the MoD was asked whether these mortars had been shipped to Iraq through Jordan, a ministry of defence official called Keen insisted that the markings "do not imply a UK provenance". He claimed that Russian, Iraqi, and Chinese arms were often marked in English. Why such arms should be marked MOD (usually denoting Ministry of Defence) and RO (Royal Ordnance) Mr Keen could not explain.

2. The King Bilder.

Researchers in the US have revealed that one beneficiary of the arms traffic through Jordan to Iraq was a mysterious firm called Bilder, which was paid 10 million francs in commission. Bilder is strongly linked to the Jordan royal family.

3. The Vereker gap.

Four months ago the *Eye* noted the evidence of Peter Vereker, head of arms control at the foreign office. He told of a list of countries to which exports of chemicals which could be used in nuclear weapons were discouraged. At first the list included Jordan. Then, suddenly, the word was tippexed out. Jordan was OK! Scrawled across the document in the handwriting of a very senior but anonymous civil servant were the rather curious congratulations: "Jordan has disappeared! Well done!"

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG,or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

A HIGHWAYMAN COMES RIDING

■ THEY'VE found just the right man to be deputy chairman of CSL, a new company which is providing "financial services" previously carried out by civil servants (or, as he sensitively puts it himself, "taking public servants and turning them into private-sector people with an emphasis on profit").

His name is Dick Turpin.

Chamber potty

TWO MORE items from the London Chamber of Commerce, which speaks up for the integrity of small businesses in the capital.

● The *Eye* asked about the rather swift change of computers in 1990, when the former suppliers were sacked and a contract for a new system signed with ICL.

The honorary treasurer of the Chamber at the time was Mr Ken Gardener, who was also a director of STC plc, holding company for ICL. Anything odd here? Not at all, says G.C. Robin Booth, the Chamber's secretary. "The board of the Chamber was fully aware of Mr Gardener's status which indeed was formally declared to it and duly minuted on 9 July 1990."

● The London Chamber speaks up for small firms who are infuriated by customers paying their bills late. So far they have not taken this up with Mr Liam Swords, chief executive of the London Chamber of Commerce's Commercial Education Trust, who has issued special instructions not to pay bills for a minimum of 60 days.

The close links between the Chamber and the trust were examined in *Eye* 830.

SILENT KNIGHT?

The Eye's nomination for the New Years Honours List is Neil Cossons, director of the Science Museum.

He plans to sack a lot of loyal workers to make money for "capital restructuring". At the same time he is spending lots of money on varnishing his and the Museum's image through London's top (and most expensive) PR agency, Lowe Bell Consultants. When the Eye asked how much museum money goes to Lowe Bell, we got the following answer. "This is in line with government policy to contract out specialised services. It is not the policy of the Museum to make public the fees paid to contractors, consultants or professional advisers".

Arise Sir Neil.

In the City

A DECISION is expected soon about the more than year-long investigation by the Serious Farce Office (SFO) into the collapse of Landhurst Leasing. Those with knowledge of the investigation by the City police fraud squad are confident it may be an unhappy new year for some with a number of arrests expected.

Landhurst collapsed in the summer of 1992 leaving a minimum £50 million hole in the £120 million loan book built up by founder Ted Ball, whose champagne lifestyle began at breakfast time.

Most of the money lent by the banks was supposed to be invested in leasing classic and luxury cars, the market for which collapsed in the recession. But receivers Arthur Andersen soon discovered that much of the business Ball had done was not leasing business at all: it was not-so straightforward banking, lending money on poor or no security to his friends in the City and the worlds of football, boxing and motor racing.

As the banking syndicate who financed Landhurst had not provided the money for such purposes, this would seem to be a focus of the police investigation.

Since the collapse, many questions have also been raised about the documentation provided (or not) regarding certain of the leases and loans. The receivers discovered that there were "paper" loans which the supposed borrowers denied, while a whole file of personal guarantees had just walked leaving Landhurst in no position to claim.

Given Ball's star-studded cast list of clients — Terry Venables, Philip Green, Tony Berry — the expected SFO prosecution promises an interesting insight into the way things were.

THE inconclusive outcome of recent elections in Northern Cyprus has turned out not necessarily to the advantage of its most prominent fugitive, Asil Nadir.

The ruling National Unity party (NUP) of his new best friend, Prime Minister Dervis Eroglu, failed to obtain an outright majority winning only 30 percent of the vote and is now destined for opposition. A coalition government is expected to be formed by the right-wing Democratic party (DP), created by Eroglu's great rival and Nadir's former best friend, President Rauf Denktash, which won 29 percent, and the leftist Republican Turkish party (RTP) which won 24 percent.

The NUP's failure seems to have restored Denktash's influence — which may also not be good news for Nadir, whose camp was busy prior to the election encouraging ideas of *President* Asil. Denktash has two years before he must face an election.

The DP is backed by businessmen hostile to Nadir because of the problems he has created for Northern Cyprus with Britain.

Nadir refused to come out and back Eroglu with his newspapers despite the prime minister injecting $4.2 million into the Nadir-controlled and all but insolvent Industrial Bank of Kibris by way of a deposit from government funds. Nadir therefore has angered his former ally while having already alienated Denktash. He already has no friends in the RTP, which blames him for funding the NUP in Polly Peck's good old days.

While the political outcome is unlikely to lead to any immediate pressure on Nadir to vacate his refuge, he is unlikely to feel as secure as he did with Eroglu in charge. But there is likely to be pressure not just for him to pay up or hand over assets to settle the ever growing $8 million tax and social security debt of Polly Peck, but also to repay the $4.2 million deposited with IBK.

With the Polly Peck hotels — prior to the loan his main source of cash — entering the low season, and limited time to take advantage of the imminent start of export shipments from Northern Cyprus of citrus, finance could become tight. All of which could keep his promised business comeback and legal actions against the SFO firmly in the pipe dream category. No wonder Nadir has been seeking permission to import automatic weapons and other arms for his goon squad.

SHAREHOLDERS in Greyfriars Investment can look forward to an eventful 1994 following the purchase of control by the English Trust.

The new chairman is Christopher Spence, hopefully no relation to the Christopher Spence best known for his involvement with E.J. Austin International at the time of its disastrous participation in the £8 million "crock of gold" scam of 1969-70.

Displaying stupidity/gullibility almost beyond belief, that Christopher Spence, then running brokers Spence, Veitch, promoted Austin shares to unsuspecting clients at the behest of fraudsters Ken Howarth and Wayne Chambers. Howarth was subsequently jailed for five years while Spence received several honourable mentions in the 1972 department of trade and industry report into the Austin scam.

The business background of new director David Pinsent makes equally colourful reading. A graduate of the M&G unit trust stable, Pinsent was subsequently employed by first David "Spotty" Rowland and then Oliver Jessel before striking out on his own, backed by tertiary bankers London & County before they went under.

That was all in the early to mid-1970s, after which little was heard of Pinsent until in 1985 he resurfaced from the exotic world of plantation companies running Anglo American Agriculture. The story was that there was a fortune in them thar tea and palm oil plantations — plus wine, citrus and cotton in California and Australia.

Four years later Anglo American was spectacularly bust. Assets valued at £30 million were estimated to realise only £6 million. Unfortunately creditors, ignoring shareholders, were owed more than £28 million, half due to Kleinwort Benson and Bank of Scotland, but with Barclays also taking a £2 million hit and loan stock holders owed more than £10 million.

Despite this success story Pinsent reappeared as chairman of metal bashers Cronite before it was taken over last year. Now he is all set to work his magic at Greyfriars!

IT IS RUMOURED — no doubt unfairly, like so much of what is suggested concerning the company and its management — that certain activities of publishers Harrington Kilbride may have attracted the attention of the immigration authorities.

What is at issue is said to be HK's policy of hiring large numbers of Poles, Russians, Hungarians, Czechs etc to sell advertising to customers back home for its technical and financial titles. Eastern Europe has become a growing market for HK publications in the past year or so. No doubt HK will be able to satisfy the authorities that any eastern Europeans on its payroll are entitled to live and work in Britain.

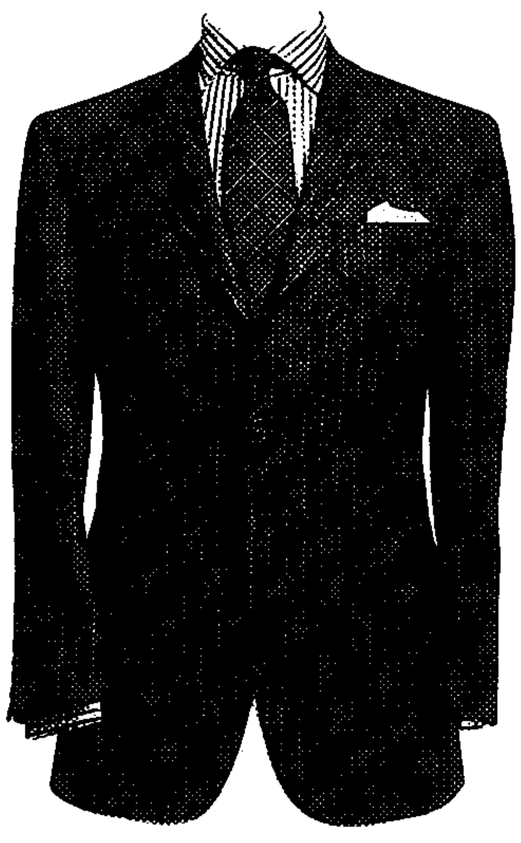
IT APPEARS that new Ladbroke chief executive Peter George may be less than popular within the troubled leisure and property group — although not as unloved as his predecessor and patron, Cyril Stein.

Already a whispering campaign has begun concerning allegations of close, personal friends being employed by the company. Such suggestions should be ignored as wholly without foundation and further evidence of "dirty tricks" by Ladbroke's potential rivals for the £4 billion National Lottery jackpot.

Meanwhile it remains to be seen whether with Cyril gone but not forgotten Ladbroke will finally enter the lottery race. With at least certain of the candidates seemingly determined to use whatever means necessary to win — other "dirty tricks" include unfounded Mafia allegations against GTECH, anonymous circulars against Branson, reported investigations of other potential runners — the well known casino baggage Ladbroke carries from the Gaming Board ban of the 70s could turn out to be too much of a handicap. If not for Ladbroke, then for its potential partners.

'Slicker'

Advertisement



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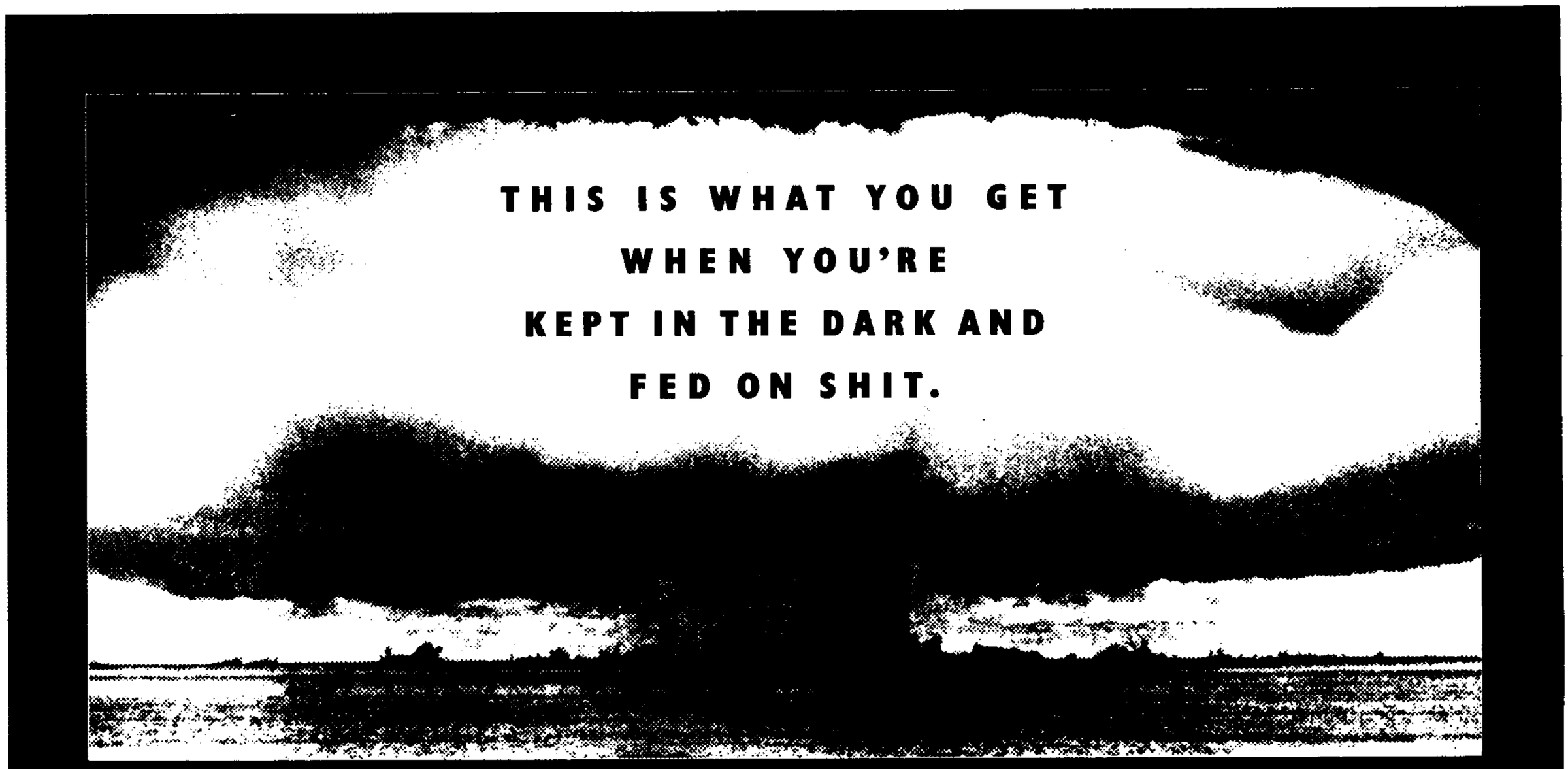

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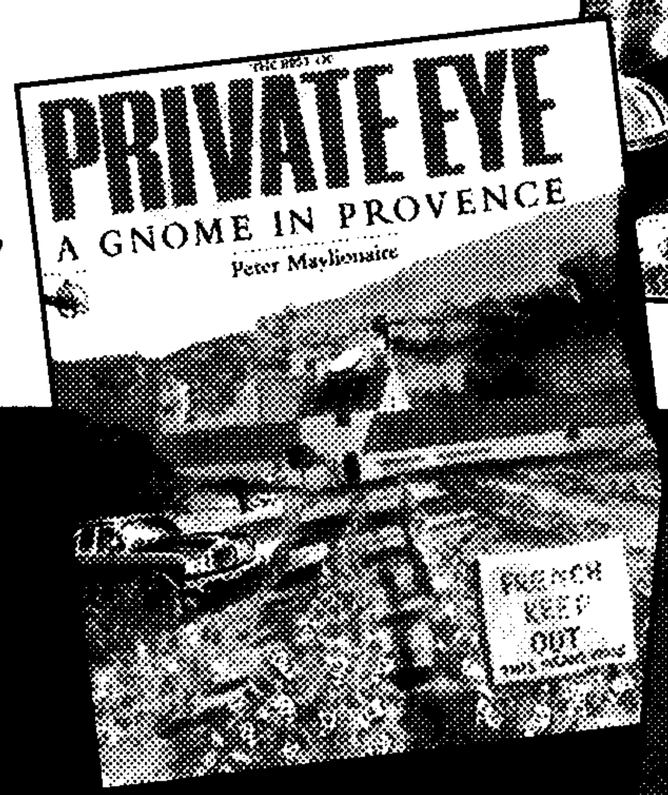

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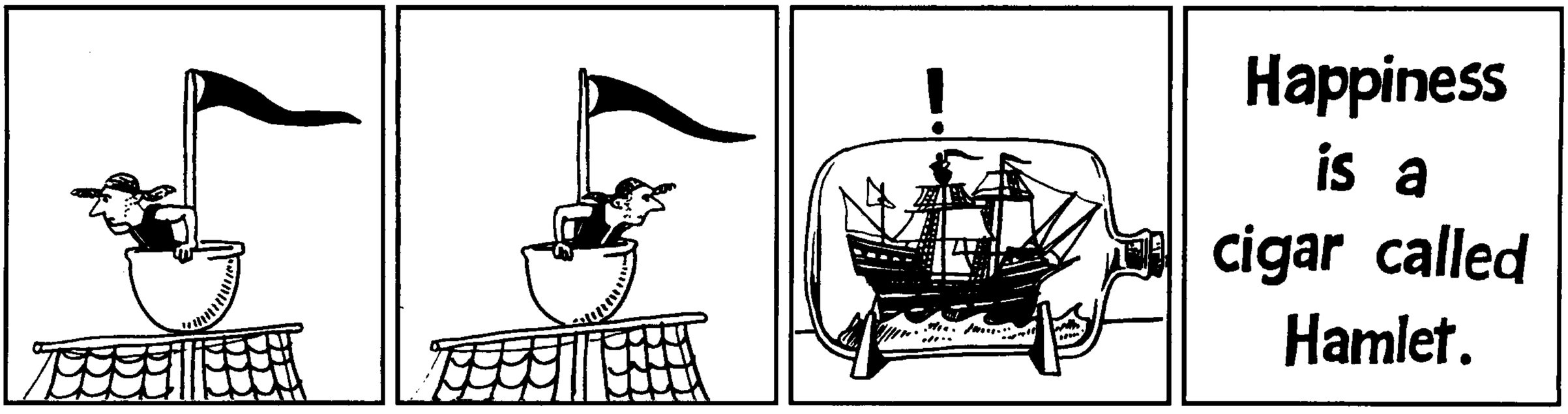

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CULTURED FEMALE (32) seeks intelligent, professional male (30s). Interests: Renaissance art, literature, early music. GSOH essential. Hampshire. Box 1536.

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ATTRACTIVE, CARING, female art teacher seeks intelligent, friendly male companion (48 plus) to share interests: theatre, cinema, exhibitions, wining, dining. Area: St Albans or South London. Box 1936.

INDEPENDENT blue-eyed bloke, 40, resident South of France but in London very often, would like to meet Asian Babe for fun England, France, anywhere. Photo ensures reply. Box 2036.

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BLONDE ATTRACTIVE English lady, young 40s, resident SE London/NE Kent, seeks white, N/S, successful, professional man, who is sensitive and caring with GSOH. Ring 0660 209726

MATURE, PROFESSIONAL man, seeks a n/s, younger, slim, tactile, professional lady, not under 1.7m, for ongoing relationship. I'm based North Kent but mobile. Ring 0660 209566

EUROPEAN, VIVACIOUS, elegant, attractive, independent lady, 50, seeks tall, smart, solvent, romantic, n/s gentleman. North London area, for sharing, caring friendship, dancing, travel, romance. Ring 0660 209717

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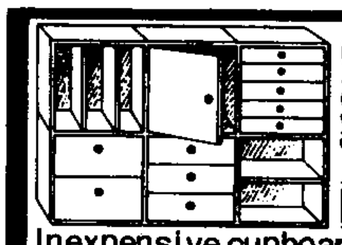

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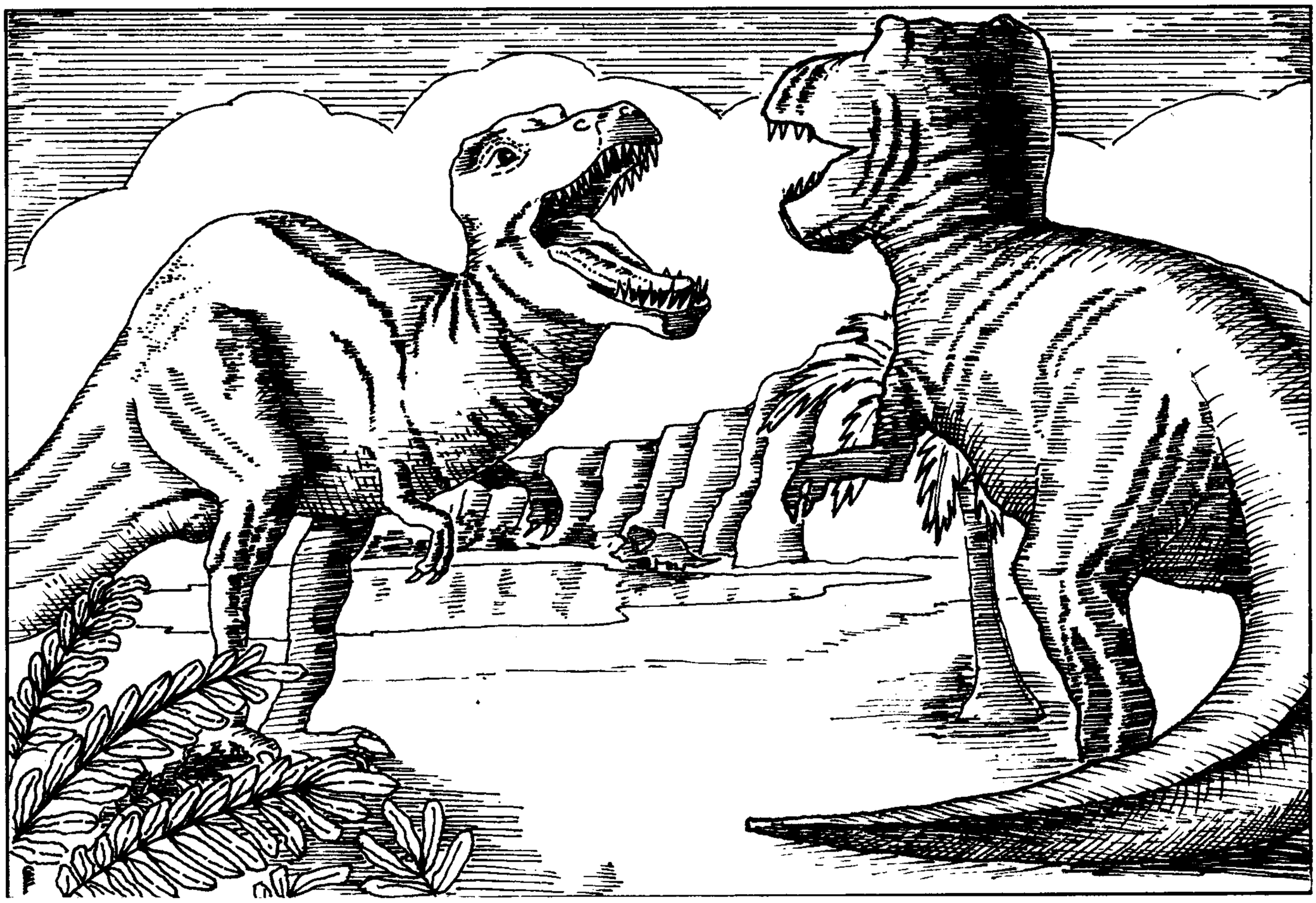

Maybe that's why they're extinct

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